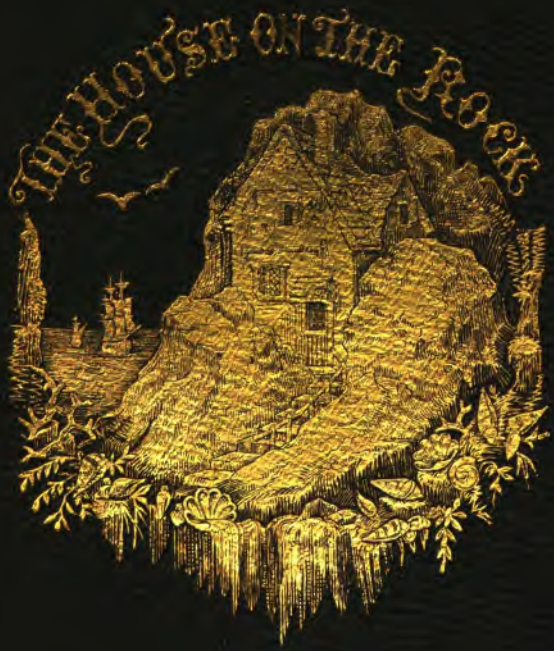
THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

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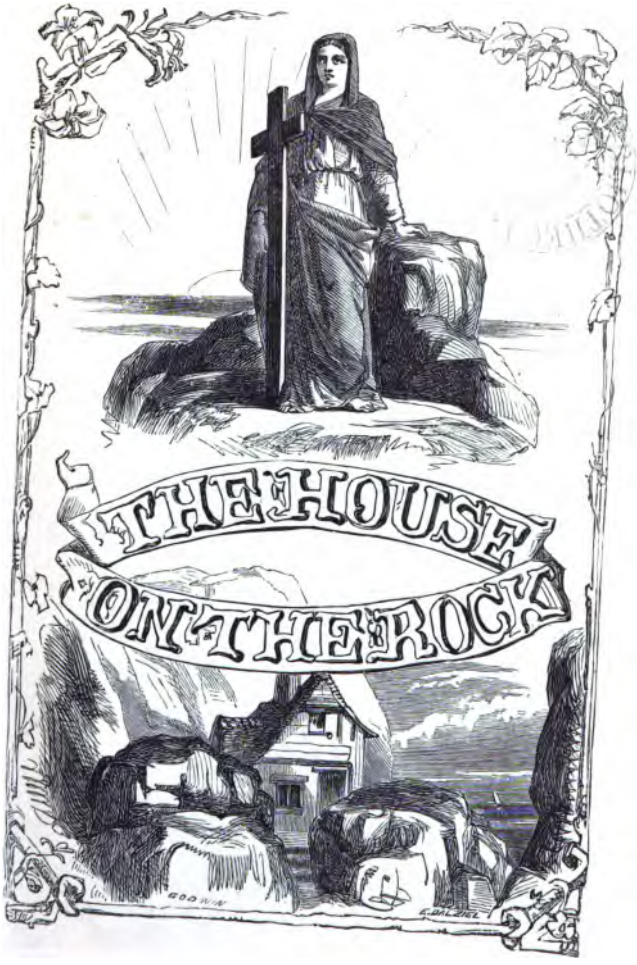
THE HOUSE
ON THE ROCK

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HOUSE ON THE ROCK;

BY

THE AUTHOR

OF

THE DREAM CHINTZ,

A TRAP TO CATCH A SUNBEAM,

&c. &c.

LONDON:

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1852.

THE

HOUSE ON THE ROCK.

SUMMER is ripening fast into Autumn,—it is evening, quiet, contemplative evening,—the sky is grey and calm,—the veil of night is slowly rising, enveloping land and sea in a soft mist. Yes, sea,—for I would have you picture yourself by the sea-side on such an eve as I describe,—the wide, restless, mysterious sea, coming into the shore so gently now, with a sweet low rushing sound, playing as it were with the pebbles, feigning to carry them with it into its waste of waters, and leaving them behind after all. How breathless we feel looking over that wide expanse, that seemingly unending mass of water, how its monotonous murmur seems to whisper of Eternity.

The moon is rising from that ridge of cloud, —turning the waves to silver,—a few children of the fishermen are paddling with naked legs and feet in the water,—their joyous voices the only sound save the murmur of the quiet sea; aye, quiet as though it knew not how to rage

"till the roar makes echo dumb,"

knew not how to run mountains high,—and dash so furiously upon that shore,—and make deep furrows with its waves as tombs for many a brave heart, and many an anxious hope, as though no mighty ship had ever perished through its fury, no fisherman's frail bark gone down beneath its waters.

Half way up the cliff, which over-hangs the sea, is a little cottage approached by rugged steps cut in the rock, with a small hand-rail to aid in the ascent,—a strange little place it looks, and yet comfortable too, for it is very clean, and in summer time there are always flowers in the window, and in the winter the light of a blazing fire, which makes it worth while to clamber up those steep steps,—for it seems to welcome you beneath its humble roof.

Three people dwell there—two old men, and a young and beautiful girl,—aye, you would

think nothing of the steps, nothing of the trouble it gives you to get there, were you sure that Mabel Raby was at home, to have one glance at her face, for it is not often such a face gladdens the eyes of mortal man. There was something unearthly in its beauty. They had said as a child she was too beautiful to live, but twenty years had gone by since then and the lovely vision, for such she seemed, was living still. I will not describe her to you because no description could equal the original, but suffice it, the face was a faultless one; living always by the sea-side, and exposed to all weather she was tanned, but nature had made her complexion very fair, for beneath the thick masses of her rich brown hair the skin was white as ivory.

The coarsest minds have somehow an appreciation and intense admiration for beauty—and in the little fishing hamlet about half a mile distant, the Beauty of the Rock, as they call her, is worshipped. She goes to market there once a week, and they will almost let her have things for nothing, for they know the old men are poor, and they think it would be a pity that such a pretty creature should want

for anything. A little strange out of the way place that village is, picturesque too,—one long straggling street built on a hill,—old fashioned cottages, most of them, crumbling with age, in which every second inhabitant makes a living by selling shrimps, which lie in heaps on a sloping board outside the window, where also those whom it concerns are informed, that "hot water can be supplied at a moment's notice," or "picnic parties accommodated." The shops are very few,—the chandler has some meat once a week, there is no regular butcher, — this man sells almost every thing the humble inhabitants need,—his shop is so full there is scarcely room to turn in it, — a green-grocer in a very small way, and a place called "The Repository" kept by an old maid divide the honours with him,—every one else sells fish.

The aforesaid Repository is curious in shells, —every thing you can imagine, and many things you cannot, made in shells. Animals which would have puzzled Cuvier,—houses no architect with the most fertile imagination could dream of,—flowers no botanist could give a name to, all—shells!—A few newspapers and periodicals, and some very stale novels, she lends

out to read; she deals in paper and envelopes, sealing-wax, ornamental wafers, perforated card, beads, netting silk, Berlin wool and in short all sorts of "Fancy articles."

I need scarcely tell you how few of such things she sold, the shells went off the best, for some of her poor neighbours had friends in London, and they would save up a little money to send some trifle at Christmas time, as they considered a present from the sea-side should be formed of shells; but she managed, poor old soul, to make a living by doing a little in the dress-making and millinery way besides, but, as you may imagine, it was scanty enough.

An old ruin, which was supposed to be a great many things, which it was quite as likely it never had been, formed an excuse for picnic parties frequently to this neighbourhood. Antiquaries often groped about the village, and took notes of many things they thought interesting and curious; for it was a quaint old place. One day an old man, dressed in the fashion of our forefathers, with a face and figure well in keeping with his costume, paused before a small house on which was an inscription, and

inquired of its inhabitants most anxiously if they could afford him any information respecting it. No! they knew nothing, and evidently as the saying is, cared less; but at length, as he was about to leave in despair, a woman put her head out of one of the cottage windows, and assured him she could tell him all about it; eagerly he prepared to listen, and his disappointment is better imagined than described, when the intelligence afforded him was contained in this sapient answer. "Why, Sir,—that ere scription has been up there ever since the house was built."

I have said that the old men were poor, so poor were they indeed that it was oftentimes a subject of conversation in the village as to how they lived at all. Matthew Whiting received a small pension quarterly, on account of some service in earlier years, as it was thought, and Mabel supported herself and father by making nets. The extraordinary beauty of the girl and the old men's singular devotion to her, and to each other, was a continual cause of wonderment, no one knew the reason of it,—Matthew, Mabel called uncle, but it was only a term of affection, for they were not related, though the

nearest and dearest ties could not have made them love one another better.

Having thus introduced you to the principal personages in my story, I shall take you to their dwelling, and admit you beneath the roof of their humble little home. On the evening I have just described, you must picture to yourself, in that dim fading light, two old men seated by the window smoking,—the moon is rising slowly, and her bright rays are illuminating the small room with its red brick uneven floor, glittering on the two brass candlesticks and pewter mugs ranged on the shelf, with some pieces of old crockery ware.

On the table in the centre their supper is laid; a red herring, some brown bread and a small piece of Dutch cheese. They smoked in silence some time, and then old Matthew said laying down his pipe,—

"Mabel be late, John."

"I'm glad on it, Matthew,—for we can say we've had our supper, when she do come,—for I'm sure there be'ant enough for three!" he added ruefully casting a glance at the poor supply.

"Ah! she's too sharplike for that,—she'll

say, where's the plates? and remember too she will, how much there was left sin' yester'even."

"True, Matthew, your'n's the head. Well, look here then,—let's dirt two of the plates, and hide away the cheese as though we'd eat it all,—and to-morrow it will come in useful."

"Very good," said Matthew, and he rose and took some plates from the shelf.

"Here give 'em to me, I can do it best, you go back to your pipe," said John.

"Noa, noa, I'll do it."

"Well, we'll do one a-piece then, for I tell'ee what, Matthew, it's hungry work."

"Nonsense, man," answered Whiting somewhat sternly, "I'm never hungry when it's not convenient."

John bore the rebuke in silence, and in silence continued his efforts to make the plates appear to have been used, and the old men had scarcely resumed their pipes, and their seats at the window, when a light voice singing, in a wild untutored manner some sailor's ditty, gave notice of Mabel's approach.

"Here I am," she said gaily, as she flung the door wide open, "were you frightened at my being so late?"

"Noa, child, noa, thou'rt saafe enough here abouts, there's not a being that would harm thee,—art hungry, lass!"

"No, father, not very,—it's too warm to eat, I think."

"Oh, teake a snack, gurl, teake a snack," said Matthew.

"Well, come along then," she said, drawing some chairs to the table.

"Oh, we could'nt wait for ee'" said John, with an attempt at a laugh, "we've done."

"Done, have you," she said, "what and left all this for me, why what can you have eaten? Nothing,—I'm sure," she continued, rising and laying her hand on her father's arm, John puffed away vehemently, and made no answer, but Matthew, drawing his pipe from his mouth, replied in his usual laconic manner.

"Where's the cheese, gurl?"

"Ah! true, there was some cheese. Then, if you really have eaten your supper, I shall sit down and eat a good one, for I am very hungry."

The old men exchanged glances of satisfaction at this speech, and puffed out the smoke in volumes, while Mabel sat down, and eat really as though she were hungry. When she had

finished, and cleared away the supper things, she drew her seat near the old men and told them where she had been.

"I have sold the nets, and here is the money, four and twopence, — so much for business,—as regards news,—Mrs. Warren's let her house to such fine folks, and they're coming Monday, and she's so pleased,—the street isn't good enough for her to walk in, for they're carriage folks, keep men-servants, and I don't know what all."

"Sorry to hear it," said Matthew gruffly, "I heates them sort o' gentry,—what are they but finery and flummery outside, and hollowness, and heartlessness within; when they do come, keep near home, you're safer here in port with the old men in their jersey shirts, than among them with their silks and satins."

"Oh, but Uncle Matthew, I may just take a look at them—Mrs. Warren says even the servants have got gold upon their dresses, and the gentleman's a Lord, a real Lord."

"If you speaks to one on 'em I've done with you," answered Matthew with great vehemence.

Mabel looked inquiringly at her father.

"Never mind, gurl, do as Uncle wants 'ee," he

answered, "he's alless roight; I've knowed him sixty years, and still I says he's alless roight;—and now my bright clock up there tells me its toime for bed, so God bless 'ee my gurl, go on now to bed and think no more of a parcel of foine folks, who'd be above looking at such as thee."

Obedient as a child, knowing no other law than the old men's simple word, Mabel kissed them and went into her little room. When the door had closed upon her, Matthew drew nearer to John, and, placing his hand on his arm, said in a low voice,

"This is bad news, John, very bad news; who is this Lord that be come down in this quiet place,—what do 'ee want?—Mabel mustn't move outside the door whilst he be here."

"But you don't think, Matthew, it be"——

"I think nothing, but that he's one of that crew, I would'nt stretch a hand to save, if the wild waters there, were about to swallow 'em before my face."

"Hush! Hush! Matthew, my man, gently,—years are come and gone since thee and me had cause to think so hardly 'o such as they. We're old now, Matthew,—the grave which makes all

men equal lies near us both,—so let's keep from bad words, for they may be our last."

And poor old John drew the back of his sunburnt hand across his eyes, and then holding it out to Matthew, said,

"Beside, old friend, though they did do us wrong, warn't it through them as we've been brought together to be what we are to one another; they've done us a sort of second hand good turn,—don't let you and I be loth to do them one when we can."

Matthew grasped his friend's hand, said nothing for a few moments, and then burst out suddenly,—

"But the gurl, John, the gurl, I tell 'ee, you must keep her from them or there'll be mischief, take my word on't; you, that have seen her grow since she was no bigger than a gull's egg, doan't know what a beauty she is,—you doan't see it, cause you're used to her, but I that have been in them lands, where they say the womenkind is the most beautiful on earth, know there bean't one on 'em can touch Mabel. She doan't know herself what she is,—what then do 'ee think it 'll be to her to hear them, as they will talk to her of her beauty,—tell her that,—But

there it makes me mad to think on't; keep her away, I say, or you'll rue the day you scorned Matthew Whiting's words."

"It would be the first time if I did, Matthew, the first time indeed; I'll keep the child as close as you like,—but the night comes on apace,—we'll to bed,—to bed.—God bless you!" and with one more grasp of each other's hands they retired to the third room, which was the extent of the cottage.

In it was slung a hammock for Matthew, and on the ground was a mattrass on which John slept. They were soon stretched in their respective resting places, and with the "lullaby" of the then tranquil sea, as soon asleep.

A week passed away, and one bright morning when the sun was shining, with that peculiar brilliancy it appears to have always by the sea, a group were seen seated on the beach beneath the cliff, the only piece of shade to be found any where near; the group consisted of an old woman, a younger one, a fine boy about eight years of age, and two young ladies; they were simply attired as befitted a ramble on the sea-shore, in gingham dresses, and coarse straw-bonnets; but those accustomed to mix

with the higher classes, could not have failed to see the stamp of aristocracy on the brows of the younger members of the party.

At some distance from them, a girl appeared searching for shells, and her picturesque appearance soon attracted their attention. She had no bonnet on, but a profusion of dark brown hair graced her very classically shaped head; her dress, of some dark material, she had turned up, to be out of the wet, and pinned behind,—a crimson handkerchief was crossed over her bosom, and the short grey petticoat beneath her gown, displayed her neat foot, in a thick leather shoe and blue stocking.

"How nice that girl looks," said one of the young ladies, "her dress is quite a costume. I wonder if she is pretty, let us go a little nearer to her."

"Pretty, Adelaide, you are always thinking about beauty."

"Well! I have a notion she is, she has such a good shaped head:—I should like to see her face, why there's De Vere speaking to her, I declare. I'll go and call him away, and then I can see her,—what are you doing De Vere?" she said, approaching the child.

"I am asking her what she is looking for,"—he answered.

The young lady's object was effected, for the girl raised her head, and lifted a pair of lustrous eyes to her interrogator's face, as she replied,

"Looking for shells, little gentleman, to sell to the Repository."

"Are you poor, then?"

"Yes, very."

"Hush! De Vere, come away."

"No,—nonsense,—Why?—I like to talk to her. Have you found any yet."

"No, Sir, none."

"May I help you, I should like to help you, you are so pretty."

"De Vere, do as I tell you, and come away, Sir;" said the young lady rather angrily. "You must excuse my brother," she continued, turning to the girl "he is so very young he does not know better. Will you, if you find a good shell, allow me to buy it?"

"Oh! yes and thank you too, Miss," she said.

"I shall be about here for some time. I am going for a sail presently, and by the time I return, you may have found one:" and the

young lady returned to her sister, who had been joined by a young man, to whom she immediately said,—"Oh! Herbert, if you could but see that girl yonder, you would go crazy. She is the most beautiful creature I ever saw."

"Where, where, what?"

"There, standing there in that picturesque sort of dress. You should have her to sit to you,—I dare say she would, she's miserably poor."

"Is she really so lovely, Adelaide," asked her sister, as the young man started off to obtain a glance. "I am sure you must be quite happy, if you have discovered some beauty."

"I am delighted, for my wildest hopes never went so far as to imagine I should ever see any thing earthly so beautiful; Oh! what a pity she is not a lady; when she speaks, and when one looks at her coarse hands, the charm is destroyed. Who can she be? I declare that impudent Herbert is speaking to her—And here comes the boat,—I must go,—you won't come, Helen?"

"Oh! no, thank you,—and I wish you would not, with only Herbert."

"My dear, don't insult him with such an

'only,' he thinks himself an experienced mariner, I can assure you."

Over the calm blue waters glided the little bark, its white sails slightly swelling in the breeze, and shot into the shore. A man sprang out and handed in Adelaide, Herbert and the little boy, and in a few more moments it had put out to sea again, leaving Mabel Raby alone on the beach, watching it as it moved so gracefully away, Helen and the servants having returned home.

Mabel stood where they had left her for some time, gazing after the vessel with a feeling of anxiety too, for in her long residence on that wild coast she had learnt how treacherous were the smiles of the sea, and her experienced eye could tell that shortly the breeze would stiffen, and that it would need some skill to manage the boat,—and forgetful of her employment, she stood there watching its progress, till the squall she anticipated really darkened the horizon, and she had to seek shelter beneath the cliffs.

The old men were in the cottage, seated as was their wont, in the long summer days, at the open window, looking out upon the sea.

Matthew had been reading aloud to John, but something in the book had touched the tender chord in his bosom, and he was descanting loudly on his hatred of the rich, and nobly born.

"Find me one person, John, who can say they've causè to thank 'em for a koind act,—shew me the poor creature who's the better for their riches,—what do'em spend their money on?—Horses and carriages, and silks and satins,—where's the sick they send a doctor to,—the hungry they feed, the thirsty they give drink to, the prisoner they visit, or the naked they clothes?—When they goes to their long account, how will they answer that?—When a poor creature's misfortunes have brought him nigh to starving, who lends him a helping hand?—Is it them as has got their houses full of victuals? No, John, its the neighbour in the next cottage, who shares his one loaf with him who's got none. I've known 'em send away the beggar at the door, whilst they have been paying a man a handful of gold for a picture."

"Well, I don't know," said John, scratching his head, and looking puzzled at his friend's

eloquence. "I doan't pretend Matthew to be clever like you, but it seems to me as though somehow we should be worse off if it weren't for them rich gentry; how do us come to have Hospitals for all sorts of complaints, and Refigees for all sorts of misfortunes, if it warnt the rich as builded 'em?"

"That's just it, John, they 'll give their money to things like that 'cause its put in the papers, and people hears on it, and praises 'em; they've no thought but that.—Oh! I hate to talk of them."

Still looking puzzled, John made no reply for a moment, but turning over the leaves of the Bible which lay on a table near him, he pointed with his thin trembling finger to a passage, and said:—

"Matthew, I'm a weak, sinful old man, with but little book learning like you have, and this is the only book as I can be said to know much about. I *do* know this I b'lieve—by heart, but I may n't be clear on some points, so just tell me what you teake that to mean."

Matthew read the verse and when he had finished it, he said:—

"God bless you, John,—and the day I

first knew you, 'Charity thinketh no evil and is kind;' true old friend, true, I need reminding this, too often I fear,—tell it me again and again, John,—that those blessed words may meake me forget them as are alless ringing in my ears. Why what fool's that, aboard that craft;" he said, starting from his seat, "all that crowd o' sail in this squall,—no sailor I'll be bound.

"Ah!" said John, "I feared this morning was too bright to last, it won't be much though."

"It 'll capsize,"—continued Matthew still eagerly looking out, "and there 'll be mischief, I shall go out:" and not waiting for his less excitable companion, Matthew hurried to the door, and soon the vigorous old man was standing on the beach, his long grey hair fluttering about in the breeze, and the misty rain and spray almost hiding from his sight the little vessel, now tossing on the waves over which it had glided so calmly a short hour ago.

Mabel had as I have said, sought shelter from the squall beneath the cliff,—but seeing her uncle out, and knowing the peril of the vessel, she flew to his side.

"Uncle, its only a young gentleman aboard, and I am sure he don't know how to manage her,—holloa to him to shorten sail."

The wind blew stronger and stronger; the vessel neared the shore and a shriek long and loud echoed among the cliffs, as she heeled over fearfully, and finally capsized.

Some fishermen, who had seen the danger of the little vessel, soon put out a boat to its rescue, and Mabel saw old Matthew run forward to join them and offer his assistance,—when he stopped suddenly as one of the men spoke to him, and turning quickly round, with an altered and stern expression on his face he beckoned to Mabel, and refusing to allow her to remain to be assured of the safety of those in such peril, he put his arm through hers, and reascended the steps in silence.

But Mabel could not in her anxiety keep her eyes from the sea, and as they neared the cottage she gave a slight cry, and catching hold tightly of her uncle's arm, said,—

"Oh look, look uncle, how shocking, they have not saved the child, he'll be drown'd, he'll be drowned!"

"Come in gurl—they 're all right, such as

they come to no hurt," he answered sternly, "there's not one amongst them down there who won't strain every nerve to save 'em,—for they can afford to pay for their lives,—go in, go in:" and with a slight push, he sent her into the cottage, and following closed the door.

Quiet old John had remained where he left him reading,—unmindful of the excitement without,—but Mabel too distressed even to mind her uncle's anger, eagerly told her father what had happened, and pointing from the window, said:—

"There, see, see, father,—they're dragging the child now into the boat. Oh!—he's dead! I'm sure he's dead. Look at those men in their fine dresses, they belong, oh! I do think they must be the Lord and his family, from Mrs. Warren's:—See they are taking the child from the boat so carefully, oh! father, he is dead!" again she repeated, with the tears filling her eyes.

"No, no, I hope not,—what do you think Matthew, eh?"

"I doant know," he answered sternly.

"Come and look, do Matthew."

"What be the use of that,—my looking,

woant bring the child to life if he be dead."—and rising from his seat into which he had flung himself, he entered his room and closed the door,—leaving Mabel and her father still gazing anxiously from the window.

Slowly along the shore moved the servants carrying the child, followed by the fishermen and Herbert supporting his half fainting sister, and at last disappeared from the sight of their anxious watchers.

"May I go and ask if the boy is dead, father?"

"Yes, child, go, do,—its very shocking, make haste home, and I'll go and see what be the matter with Uncle, he's put out somehow."

Swiftly Mabel flew down the cliffs, and John went to his friend, but he was still stern and angry, and begged to be left alone.

Never disputing his word, or thwarting his wishes, John did leave him, and returned to his book; that book he so valued,— that had been his study, his consolation, his recreation, through years of privation and trial; and by the holy influence of which he had grown to be the gentle, uncomplaining, charitable, humble being, he was. He did in truth live in the

House built on the Rock, and feared no tempest,—calmly he let the storms of life sweep over him, as calmly as when the howling wind and raging sea kept him waking on his hard mattrass, and he only prayed for those whose Houses were on the Sand.

On the side of his bed old Matthew sat, his eyes fixed on the ground, evidently in deep thought. What was the subject of his earnest meditation? Memory has carried him far, far back over the space of many years,—if you are inclined to go back so far with him, read on.

He sees a rustic English village, and two lads, one a bold daring fellow, the other good, gentle and timid,—they were at school together as little children,—they are friends and neighbours now, they seek to earn a living honestly and each finds employment on the same estate.

The quiet gentle boy became a gardener, he had always loved tending flowers and such occupations;—the other was gamekeeper,—they are still good friends,—but now before the old man's vision flits a fair form "and a change comes o'er the spirit of his dream," and midst

the flowers in the garden, she is wandering,—by her side one no longer his friend, but his rival, John Raby.

They are no more together as they used to be,—he can remember how in the wood he used to wander alone by the hour, with his gun and dog, haunted by the sweet face of the farmer's daughter, and almost hating his former friend and companion: and now how his eye flashes, and his hands clinch, as he recalls with all the freshness of yesterday, hearing one day in his solitary ramblings in the wood, two persons talking earnestly,—the voices of Mabel and his master's son: poisonous words of flattery fall from the lips of the young man, and promises of wealth unbounded.

In a moment Matthew stands between the tempter and his intended victim: he has saved her for his rival it is true, but he *has* saved her: even in memory he seems to act the scene again, and the heat drops, fall from his brow with agitation;—still thought carries him on, and he is on board a noble vessel outward bound, an exile from his home, friendless and alone in the world, dismissed his master's service on a charge of robbery!— His old companion of so many

years, his ungenerous rival, is his false accuser.

His fancied injustice of the wealthy and powerful, and the ingratitude of all men, makes him hard and reckless, and he roams abroad he cares not whither.

Years pass on,—he has gathered a little money and is coming home,—aye, old man, it is well you forget not this passage of your life; a poor Swiss Priest is on board the same vessel, sick and distressed; misfortunes have pressed on him heavily, losses of friends and fortune, imprisonment, ingratitude, illness, all that falls to the lot of suffering humanity, had been his to bear.—Is he reckless, hard-judging, unforgiving?—No,—from his lips flow gentle words of forgiveness to his enemies, leniency to all, submission in affliction, and a humble spirit tells him he deserves the worst that has befallen him.—With the sound of the waves breaking upon the shore seems to come the words of the good Priest, and old Matthew fancies he feels again that trembling wrinkled hand laid upon his, and sees the earnest eyes fixed on him as he tells him,—

"Remember that in The Prayer, we pray God

to forgive us, as we forgive each other; would you be content to abide by this,—do you forgive this young man you say has wronged you, as you hope to be forgiven. It is not enough to say you forgive him, you must act as though you did. Seek him when you reach England, hold out your hand to him, and shew him you have not learned the Christian creed in vain;—seek to serve him even more readily than you would serve another: and if there be left in his heart one trace of the better nature that you loved 'ere he sinned against you, in that one spot of good ground watered by your love and mercy, there will spring up fresh flowers, bearing fruit unto eternity:—and you then will have made the first step towards that perfection we were bid to strive for, for you will not like man, have revenged your injury,—but like God have forgiven it."

The tears are standing in poor old Matthew's eyes, as he remembers these words of admonition, and tries to think whether he has followed this advice. He had found his old companion struggling to obtain a living, for when he married he had left his situation, and worked as a gardener on his own account; but

fortune had not smiled on him, and he was now a widower with one child.

Yes! the girl they had both loved now lay beneath the green turf in the village churchyard, where they had played as children, and all that remained to recall her existence was the little child, who with large lustrous eyes like her poor mother, gazed in the stranger's face.

No word of the past did Matthew utter, nothing of the false charge,—nothing of the wrong his master's son had sought to work John's wife, nor how he had saved her. He only said he was a lone man, and that it would be kind to come and live with him, and cheer his solitude;—that together they could work and support the little child.—"You must be my brother John, and she must call me Uncle."

And so it was, the little money he had earned abroad he placed in a bank, and the interest from it, aided by the little work they managed to obtain, and as Mabel grew up, what she could do, kept them from starving; and with their contentment and moderate wants, had enabled them to live for many years.

Accident one day revealed to John, the se-

cret Matthew strove to keep. In talking over their days of servitude, John said he had never rightly known why Matthew left; this simple statement and the honest glance of the old man's eye, was a convincing proof to Matthew of his innocence, and he told him all: — he had been discharged suddenly, and that he had afterwards heard Raby had accused him of stealing. Poor simple-hearted John, to him this intelligence was bewildering, how could any one have asserted so base a falsehood? — "Some enemy must have done this, enemy to us both;" but he had had none he thought, and as he talked on, for the first time it occurred to Matthew, that the guilty coiner of this cruel charge had been— His Master's son!

He remembered then how he had muttered he would be revenged, when he robbed him of his prey, and in one short week he was discharged, but he said nothing of this to John, only begged him not to talk of it again, but to forget as he should; and years had passed away again since then, and the monotonous tranquillity of the lives of the old men had been undisturbed, and the child had grown up to womanhood in years, but with the same childlike heart

and nature as when first she gazed so earnestly at Matthew, until this accident to the sailing vessel. Why had it brought such a long train of thought into the old man's mind; and made him thus feel after so many years that he had not obeyed the Priest's injunction, — not forgiven those who had wronged him, as he hoped to be forgiven?

For years had he nourished feelings of envy, hatred, and uncharitableness, towards that class, amongst which he numbered one being, who had done him wrong, — and now trembling on the brink of the grave, he had rejected the opportunity which Providence had accorded him of repairing his sins, by assisting to save the life of a fellow-creature, because he was a Peer's son! The hurried speech of the fishermen, "Make haste, it's Lord Newbery's son," had turned the tide of good feeling into the bitter channel of revenge, and thus he had too truly done as he said he would, refused to stretch a hand to save one of them from a watery grave.

Thus in strictly analyzing his own feelings, Matthew found he had forgiven John Raby, because it pleased him to do so, because he liked him, and the estrangement was painful

to him; and because in the face of the young child were reflected the features of her whom he had loved.

At the time that he held out the hand of reconciliation to John Raby, he had fancied that the admonition of the Priest had alone induced him to do so, but now a new light seemed to have burst upon him, and he felt in how poor a manner had he obeyed that injunction, and how fearful would the account have been he must have rendered, had his soul been required of him ere this; and earnestly did the old man pray for pardon and for time, to grow a wiser and a better man, ere he should go hence to be no more seen.

Long had Matthew remained alone in this earnest contemplation, until at length Mabel ventured to summon him to his tea, and greatly were she and her father surprised at the alteration visible in him: he had gone into his room stern and angry, and he was now all gentleness and kindness, and his first question was to know if the child had been saved.

Mabel had been to enquire, and had learnt that it was not dead, but in a dangerous state. "I am sure, Uncle, I had no idea I was

speaking to those fine folks on the beach, they had got no fine clothes on, only cotton dresses such as Mrs. Warren wears herself, not half so fine they wer'nt, as our Parson's wife is on a Sunday. I hope you arn't angry?"

"No, Child, no, not I, speak to 'em of course if they speak to you, only remember their talk aint our'n, and so don't think they've the same meaning as we have, that's all. They're fond of talking nonsense to a poor girl like you, it's amusement to them; give them a civil answer and get away as soon as you can, that's all; go down again before nightfall, and ask how the child is."

The last thing, therefore, before bedtime, Mabel went to the village and returned with the tidings that the poor child was gone, and the Mother was in an alarming state from the shock, being in very delicate health; the reason for the visit to this quiet retired spot.

Matthew made no answer when Mabel told him this sad news, only wishing her good night, went away silently to bed. But he could not sleep, for the first time the roaring of the sea disturbed him, and he tossed and turned uneasily on the mattrass he now for

the first time found hard and uncomfortable, and when he at length fell into an uneasy slumber, he saw a childish form washed on shore, and carried out again to sea, and heard its faint cries for help, and then a shriek rent the air, and a woman stood upon the beach, and cried to Heaven to save her child,—and knelt at his feet, and bade him for mercy's sake make one effort to rescue her darling; and he strove to do so, but his feet seemed fastened to the ground, he could not move, and he could not answer the distracted Mother:—and then it was Mabel, his own young love, whose life was thus in peril; he saw her tossed on those waves, dashed roughly against rocks, and still he could not move, nor render help, nor call for it from others; and thus in such dreams the night passed, whilst good old John lay sleeping the peaceful sleep of a child.

Morning dawned at length, and Matthew was glad to rise early, and get out into the air; he wandered long by the sea, and was about to return home, when he saw at some little distance Mabel conversing with a young man, a stranger to him, and so unmistakeably a gentleman that he wondered what

could be his object in talking with her; and again the old feeling of anger and distrust arose in his mind, and he was about to call her loudly to him, when his new determination to be less suspicious and hard judging, occurred to him, and instead of calling to her he returned quietly home.

"Mabel is a good gurl, simple and true-hearted, she'll tell us all about it," he thought to himself, "mayhap, she be asking how that poor mother is to-day;" and a slight shudder passed through his frame, as again the vision of the drowned child rose up before him.

Mabel returned soon after, and said she had been talking with the boy's elder brother; he had been walking since daybreak on the beach, unable to bear the house which was now so filled with grief. His mother was too ill to be moved, and yet the noise of the sea, recalling so incessantly the mode of her child's death, made her more wretched; his sisters were employed in attending her, and for himself, maddened by the constant self-reproach that it was through him the child had lost his life, he knew not how or in what way to pass the weary hours. Yes, a change had indeed come

over the household, before so joyous and happy; Lady Newbery's delicate health had been the only cause of uneasiness to this otherwise fortunate family.

Possessed of wealth and rank, which gave them the power, for they wanted not the will of doing good; with talents, in the exercise of which their days passed swiftly and pleasantly, and with the truest affection for each other, they had nothing to wish for, which this world could afford: but now all that they before enjoyed and delighted in had lost the charm, and they could only wander listlessly from room to room, occasionally going to gaze at the darling whose merry little voice was stilled, and who would soon be removed for ever from their sight. On Adelaide, the gay, joyous hearted Adelaide, the impression was most deep, perhaps from the contrast which her now extreme sorrow made to her former gaiety and high spirits.

Helen had been always quiet and serious, and now wept silently when alone, but was calm and uncomplaining when with the rest of her family, and continued patiently and carefully to wait upon her Mother; but Adelaide

could do nothing but lament, and recall each word and action of the poor child, and wish again and again with bitter tears, that she had never let him accompany them in their vessel. Her sorrow was most distressing to witness, and increased poor Helen's trials excessively; no one who knew her had seen tears in Adelaide's bright eyes before; she often sent forth a ringing laugh, as she said "Why do people cry? I could not if I tried." Her spirits had been so untiring, that the sensitive Helen had often gazed at her in wonder. A short hour or two before this fatal accident, she had been screaming with glee and merriment at the waves, as they chased each other on to the shore, running to meet them, and as they washed over her little feet, clapping her hands and laughing with childish mirth; while Helen had sat upon the beach gazing over that wide sea with silent awe, and thinking of it as a vast tomb beneath which so many busy heads and loving hearts were lying calm and loveless now.

And yet this bright high-spirited girl, sunk down at the first touch of grief; and Helen, who had ever been occupied with sad thoughts, whose eyes had filled with tears at every tale of

woe, bore up bravely beneath this first great sorrow, which had befallen the sisters. To the many, those who knew them not well, this was strange, they had always thought Helen would sink beneath a heavy weight of trouble, but that Adelaide would bear up nobly; but they who thus judged, knew not the heart of the girls, nor the motives from which these actions sprung.

Had they questioned the old nurse who had been with them from their birth, she would have told them how this could be which appeared so strange; how Helen from her earliest childhood had loved to sit on her knee, and listen again and again to stories from the Scriptures, when too young to read them for herself; how her favourites were those which told of sorrows nobly borne, of how faith in God and trust in his promises had never been disappointed, and her little eyes would fill with tears as she heard of the mighty sacrifice made for all, and she would raise them to her nurse's face and murmur softly "how good we ought to be;" and that during the hours thus spent, Adelaide would be romping wildly with her brother Herbert, or riding an unsaddled pony

round the park, thinking Nurse's stories long and wearisome and wondering how Helen could sit and listen.

Never as she grew older were these lessons of piety, thus early learnt, forgotten, but in all her minor sorrows she thought of the holy men of old, and what sufferings they had experienced, and how they had borne them, and then she smiled where others would have wept. Truly on that Rock where no storm could shake it, had Helen founded her House, and thus when this first storm assailed it, it fell not.

It was a touching sight to see these sisters together in their affliction; when Helen could be spared from her Mother, Adelaide would come and seat herself on the ground, lay her head in her lap and ask her to comfort her. "Why are you so calm, Helen," she would say, "it worries me to see you work and read, and cease to cry, whilst I can do nothing else: how can you help it?"

"I think it wrong, dear Adelaide, to grieve so much at the trials God sends us; besides, we are so sure that the darling child is happy, and that is a great consolation; we shall go to him although he will not return to us, all our

tears and complaint will not bring him back, and rebelling thus against God's will, renders our hope of seeing him again most uncertain."

"Ah, Helen, you are so good; you can reason about everything, but I can't indeed, and it seems so dreadful for a child to die: old people we expect to lose, but a child, a little good child to die, and such a death. Oh, it is so shocking!" and again her tears burst forth, and she sobbed violently. Helen let her weep for some time, and then she said in a low voice, which trembled with emotion, "I always think when children die, He who so loved them on earth, has called them to him in Heaven, and, therefore, with the sorrow for my own loss is mingled this consolation, the knowledge of my little brother's great gain, and I cannot grieve as one without hope."

"Ah! well you do not feel things as I do. I was not made to bear things as you are — but never mind, it is no use talking to me; I am miserable, I shall always be miserable, only love me and kiss me, Helen, and be patient with me,—read to me, I should like that, I think."

"Yes, certainly, what shall I read, dear?"

"Oh! anything, a novel, something light,

something to make me forget my sorrow, for a time at least."

Helen rose and fetched a book, and again supporting her sister's head upon her lap, read to her until called to attend upon her mother; thus taking the most effectual method of dispelling her own sorrow by her unselfish and unceasing devotion to others.

A week passed, and the child was borne away from the village he had visited in all the strength and spirits of his young life, to be buried at their country seat; the child of eight years old to be laid beside the man of eighty, his grandfather, the only other occupant of the family vault.

Mabel and her father came to see the sad cavalcade pass by; Matthew would not come out. He was almost the only person in that small hamlet who was not, for the mode of the boy's death, his rank — and the fact of its being something to see, had drawn all who could come, from their homes.

Old men and women who murmured sadly, as the carriages passed, "Well, we thought it would have been our turn first." Mothers with children in their arms, and clinging about them,

looking with swimming eyes at their little ones and saying earnestly, "God help his poor Mother,"—and one in deep mourning standing alone answered with a sternness, which her grief excused, "I have lost mine, it is no worse for her;" and so by a road watered with many tears of sympathy, the child passed on to his last home on earth, and another Angel had joined his voice to the choir, singing for ever the praises of the Eternal in the fields of light.

On the evening of this day the two old men at the Rock sat together after their scanty meal, and on each of their faces was a more than usual cast of thought. Matthew had since the accident grown kinder and gentler, but more silent than ever; and though for the last few moments, Mabel and John had been discussing an important subject, he had made no remark.

"What is to be done, I dont know;" said John, "think of something Matthew, we've never been so put to it before; twopence in the house and no means to get more as I sees. What shall us do, old friend, eh?"

"We've had supper," he said gently, "haven't we?"

"Yes, but to-morrow, Matthew?"

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so wretched without me;" and then the young man had answered earnestly, "Think over it, and let me know to-morrow."

To-morrow!—when the sun sunk to rest, as it seemed, in the bosom of the wide ocean, tinting the earth and sky with a soft rose colour, the old men's home was desolate, no more beneath their roof was the bright face, that had been the light of their declining days:—she was gone,—she had left them—the object of so many years solicitude, for whom they had prayed and worked, and denied themselves always comforts and ofttimes necessaries; whose merry voice would have cheered and consoled them in their later days, whose gentle hands they had hoped would close their eyes, was gone,—they knew not where, but with a heavy curse upon him, Matthew named—Herbert Everton—as the spoiler who had robbed them of their treasure.

The scene beneath that cottage roof, when the old men were first convinced Mabel had gone to return no more, was truly a sad one to witness; the stern, inflexible Matthew, his grief almost swallowed up in anger, paced up and down the room through the whole night; never

speaking but to utter imprecations upon Mr. Everton, and reproaches upon Mabel, whilst old John sat motionless in the same seat, where he had first heard the tidings of his loss.

He might have been an image of stone, but for the occasional tremulous sigh, and the large tears which now and then stole down his sunburnt face.

When they had first missed her, Matthew had hurried down to Mrs. Warren's, full of his suspicions, and he there learnt that Lady Newbery and her daughters were leaving almost immediately, that Mr. Everton had gone on early in the morning; that she had seen nothing of Mabel for some days, until that very morning, quite early, when she had passed hurriedly by with a small parcel, in the direction of the neighbouring town.

He gained no further information of her, excepting from a woman, a stranger in the place, who confirmed Mrs. Warren's statement, that at a very early hour she had met a young girl, carrying a small parcel, going towards the next town.

He returned with this scanty intelligence to John, and asked what they should do, but

the shock seemed to have paralysed him, for he made no answer, only put his hand to his head, and looked up with a childish expression in his old friend's face; and so Matthew, convinced in his own mind of the fate of the poor girl, vowed bitterly, that the ruin she had brought upon herself she should bear, and would take no further steps to find her, although her poor old father looked up piteously and asked him in touching accents to bring him back his darling, or he should die.

The news of her loss soon spread through the hamlet, and a thousand reports were afloat; some more merciful than others, suggested that she might have fallen from the cliff into the sea; but the greater number shook their heads, and said they thought no good would come of her, for ever talking to that idle young man, and that pretty faces were oftener a curse than a blessing, and that they had always thought how it would be. A few ascended the steep cliff to condole with the old men, but Matthew had closed and barred the door, and would admit no one.

The night passed slowly for those two in their bitter sorrow, and when the day at length

dawned, Matthew, utterly exhausted, flung himself upon his bed, but John remained in the same position, gazing from the window with a fixed and vacant stare. The day was not many hours old, when a low tap at the cottage door roused Matthew from a fitful sleep, and looking from the window he roughly demanded who was there. A little boy had brought a letter for John Raby; eagerly Matthew snatched it from the lad, tore it open, and with some difficulty making out a very illegible scrawl, he read the following,—

"Father, dear Father and Uncle, don't be "unhappy about Mabel, and don't be angry "with her, she is only gone not to be a burden "to you, to try and get money for us all. I am "as happy as I can be away from you, only "afraid you are frightened about me, but don't "be, I am quite safe, getting money, and you "shall have it all, and I will come home when I "have got enough to keep us all. I shall often "write and tell you how I am, but not where "I am, because you would be angry. Dear "Uncle and Father, I am always your loving "child, Mabel."

An enclosure had fallen on the ground, it was a couple of sovereigns in a piece of paper.

Poor John burst into a passionate, but refreshing shower of tears, as he ejaculated again and again, "Thank God!" But on Matthew's face was a smile of bitterness and contempt.

"You will use that money?" at length he asked, when John's emotion had somewhat subsided.

"Why not, Matthew? oh! because of robbing the dear child, bless her! but how can us return it to her? We can lay it by, true, till she do come home, but she'd like better to know we'd used it, Matthew? Thank God, she's safe, my precious child!"

"Safe?—are you a fool, John? or mad? Where think you she got that money? How is she earning it? is it honest? if so why do she fear to tell us? I'll starve,—I can starve, —but I won't buy food with the wages of her sin."

For the first time Matthew's meaning flashed upon the mind of the good, true, simple-hearted John. He rose from his chair and fixing his clear honest eyes upon Matthew's face, he said, "I am old and feeble, Matthew, but had any other man but you dared to say that against my child, this right arm should have gathered all the strength it has to lay him at my feet.

Call back those words, Matthew! Ask my pardon and her's, my spotless child, or this day I go out from here to beg my bread from door to door, sooner than rest beneath the same roof with you."

"John! I would not pain you, if I could help it, and Heaven knows I'd sooner die than accuse her wrongfully; but tell me, if you can, why she should fear to say where she be if she were doing right. Eh! old friend? I'd sooner have laid her young head in the grave than this — than this!"—and turning his head aside he dashed away the briny tears which were gathering in his eyes, and then holding out his hand, said in a low interrupted voice, "John! let's not grow angry against each other,— now— alone like this,—we must be more comfort to each other; it's a sorrow we share together; you, her Father, could scarce love her better,— for John, I believe you never know'd it, but in her face I saw again the features of the only creature I ever loved — her Mother, — and when I tell you that our Master's son sought to take her from you, as—as this villain has done our Mabel, and that I, John, saved her, for, for you too,—you'll for that service forgive the

hard words I used just now; and think I've some cause to be suspicious of that rich and powerful set, who use their riches but to destroy the poor and weak."

With utter amazement had John listened to this avowal from his friend, and at the conclusion of his speech could scarcely believe he had heard aright, until Matthew had recounted, with the faithful memory with which he retained this period of his life, his love for Mabel Graham, his struggles against it and finally the service he had rendered her.

"My poor dear wife! and she never told me this,—nor you, Matthew—why hast never told me?"

"I thought you know'd, John, from her; 'twas that as hardened me so at first, to think you I had served, should turn like that upon me,—get me, by a false charge like that, sent away without a character; as I thought to drive me from her. Ah! I had bitter thoughts when I left England, but I came home altered, John, determined to forgive you and return good for evil. The task was easy, when I saw the child with the mother's face; and I was happy to bring you here, more happy though, old friend,

when I heard you had never wronged me, and I'd have died for you or for her, if I could have served you: but she's left us, John, of her own free will, or she'd not write as she do; we're poor and friendless, the rich man has taken away the 'ewe lamb,' and we must be content without it; we've no money to buy justice, we must suffer patiently."

"No! no! Matthew! The lamb may have strayed, but it is not lost, and it shall come hoame, for I sha'nt rest till it be found; think you I can sleep in my bed and not know really whether I've a child I dare own or no? I'll find her if she be above ground and know the truth, and I'll steake my loife, Matthew, you ha' judged her wrong. Great people be easy enough to find, and I'll have my child if she be there; but she's not, she's working her fingers to the bone somewhere's for you and me, but she's pure and honest as when she left this house."

In a large room built out from a house in one of the fashionable squares in town, a group of persons are assembled. The apartment bears the appearance of an artist's studio; long

windows reach nearly from the ceiling to the ground, and across the lower panes the shutters are closed, the walls are oak wainscot, and the floor is also of polished oak; a Turkey carpet covers the middle of the room, and at the end is a raised platform, on which lie a heap of shawls and a rich satin dress. Several paintings are leaning against the walls, and a large easel supports an unfinished picture; casts of hands and feet, vases filled with flowers, a guitar with a broad blue ribbon attached to it, a small lay figure, a Spanish hat with a sweeping feather, books, a dagger with a silver hilt, pipes, &c. are lying about in picturesque confusion, and on a tiger-skin mat in front of the fireplace, is extended a huge dog of the bloodhound tribe.

On the platform aforesaid, stands a girl in a rich Persian costume, and before the easel is a young man with a pallet and brushes in his hand, contemplating the lovely model before him; seated near him is a young lady in deep mourning, she holds some work in her delicate white hands, but she is at present gazing alternately at the model and the picture, as though to ascertain if the artist has been

successful in his efforts to fix on his canvas the beautiful features before him.

"I do not think the eyes are quite dark enough, Herbert dear, do you?" she asked.

"Yes," answered the young man, "they are dark enough, but the expression is different; I shall never get it right, I'm afraid, but I expect Maurice Leigh here presently, and he can give me a few hints."

"He did those busts of the Ladies Caroline and Julia Freeling did he not?"

"Yes, and made excellent likenesses."

"Well, my dear Herbert, I cannot really spare Mabel any longer, besides I am sure she must be tired."

"She shall rest," said the young artist, "if she wishes, but you do not want her to go just yet; let her stay till Leigh comes, and then she shall go directly. Are you tired, Mabel?"

"No Sir, not very," answered the lovely model.

"Well, at any rate you can rest for a little while, you will find a seat close to you, and Leigh will be here shortly."

The girl moved from her position on the platform, the door opened and the artist ex-

claimed. Here he is." As the person he had just named entered. "Well, old fellow, how d'ye do?"

"How d'ye do? Good morning, Miss Everton, do you often come and grace your brother's studio?"

"Oh, yes, Adelaide is very good, she comes to cheer my solitude often, I have been wanting you all the morning, Leigh, I cannot get on with this, look!" Leigh advanced towards the picture, and as he did so his eye rested for the first time on Mabel, he started and looked enquiringly at Herbert.

"That young person is kind enough to be my model;" he said, answering his friend's glance,— "but I am very stupid, I think,—she has stood patiently to me for hours, and I have got no further than this, and I am sure it is not like her, is it?"

His friend made no reply, but looked with much earnestness, first in the face of the beautiful girl, and then at the picture.

Whilst he is thus engaged I will pause to describe him. He was tall and well formed, not handsome, but with large grey eyes that had in them an unusual depth of feeling and

expression; his thin compressed lips spoke determination, and his high expansive forehead a powerful intellect; he had a low and thrilling voice, and a manner of saying the simplest common places, which made them remarks worth listening to. He was a sculptor by profession, but he loved Art in every shape, and reverenced the beautiful wherever he could find it.

His father had been the son of very wealthy parents, but by dissipation and reckless squandering he had made it necessary for Maurice to work for his subsistence; his mother had died when he was yet young, and with many fears had left him to the care of such a father, but strange enough he became the strictest as well as the most judicious guardian of his boy, and Maurice Leigh had grown up to manhood with a strong hatred of those vices, which had ruined his father, and with a visionary and romantic disposition which suited well the profession he had adopted, and kept him also from mixing much in society. When in London he was always in his own studio, or those of his brother artists; and in the country he would wander away into the woods and most wild and lonely places, caring for no companion, save a dog

or book. When he had sufficiently examined the picture he fixed his large grey eyes again on the original for some moments, then in a low voice told Herbert of the faults in his work.

"Ah! I see, thank you, thank you;—I won't trouble you any more to-day, Mabel. I am sure you have had enough of it."

"Ah! that's right, I want her," said Miss Everton: "come, Mabel," and gathering up her work she left the room followed by Mabel.

As soon as the door was closed, Leigh asked, "Who is that, Everton?"

"Oh! is she not lovely? Did you ever see such a face?"

"Exquisitely beautiful," answered Leigh in his calm voice, at variance with the enthusiastic words.

"Who is she?" again he asked.

"Why, it's a strange story, quite a romance. You know of course that we were at the sea-side all of us when———.

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted his friend.

"Well, we found this girl that very unhappy day, on the beach looking for shells, and were all struck with her beauty; she saw the acci-

dent and came afterwards two or three times to enquire for the poor child. My sisters grew interested in her, and I frequently in my restless moods, strolling on the beach would stand and talk to her. There was something in her unusual beauty, and the simplicity of her nature, that seemed to soothe the perturbation of my mind, and day after day, so long as we remained, I never missed an interview with my humble and beautiful friend. One day she came to me looking very sad, and told me that the old men with whom she lived, her Father and Uncle, were in dreadful distress; they had scarcely food to eat, and it struck her that to save them from the burden of keeping her, she would go out to service, and she had thought that possibly my sisters might want a maid to wait on them. I promised to ask them.—The moment I mentioned it they were delighted; they were about to part with the maid they then had, and Adelaide, who is mad about beauty, was charmed at the thought of having Mabel's sweet face always beside her.

"The girl's delight when she heard she was really to come was extraordinary; she only begged that nothing might be said about it to

any one in the Village, and that she might be allowed to meet the carriage in the next town, and not go with my mother and sisters from the house where we lodged; of course this was agreed to although we knew not her reason. She was punctual to her appointment, and we brought her to town,—and she is now Adelaide's sole and engrossing amusement; she is teaching her to read and write and work, and says her progress is wonderful. My mother is willing to encourage Adelaide in this hobby, as her distress at my brother's death had injured her health and spirits so seriously, that the medical men said that some amusement, which would take her thoughts from herself, was the only thing to cure her; this does so effectually."

"A dangerous person to have in the house, I think, for you, Herbert!"

"My dear fellow, she is a fisherman's daughter."

Leigh made no answer, but taking up a brush made a few touches on the picture, and then asked Herbert if he would come out with him. He consented, but said he must first go and dress. "You will find some books about and can amuse yourself till I come down, can't you?"

"Oh! yes, don't hurry yourself."

Herbert left the room, and Leigh taking up a pencil and a sheet of paper began to draw. "Beautiful" he thought, "Yes she is beautiful! — I have seen her face before somewhere. —Why, yes. That picture in the lumber-room. —I'll have it down, and look at it again,— a singular resemblance,—I never believed anything living could be so beautiful as that picture: she looks amiable and good too,— and they say clever,— pshaw! — what an ass I am."

He whistled an air, scratched through what he had drawn, and tearing the paper began again. "Humph, that's not unlike her, what on earth made me do that? I used to think Adelaide pretty, good gracious, she looked quite ugly to-day."

The door opened and Mabel entered, carrying in her arms the gorgeous Persian dress, which she had exchanged for one many degrees simpler, but far more becoming, a blue muslin dress exquisitely made, a black silk apron, and her rich hair, covered by a very coquettish little cap of white lace.

"I beg your pardon, Sir, I did not know any one was here."

"It is of no consequence," answered Leigh, "allow me, that is too heavy for you," he continued; she was trying to lift with her disengaged hand the lid of an oaken chest; he raised it for her, she deposited the dress within it, and thanking him with a smile which seemed to make sunshine in the room, she departed.

An hour or two afterwards, Maurice Leigh was groping in a lumber room at the top of his father's house, in search of a picture, which he at length found, and carrying it down stairs he seated himself in the first chair he came to, and carefully wiping away with his handkerchief the dust that had gathered upon it, he surveyed it with deep interest. He was contemplating it so intently, and so lost in thought, that he was quite unaware that he was being watched, and was roused from his meditations at length, by a voice, saying; —

"Well, Maurice, I hope you are amused. What have you got there?"

"My dear Sir! How you startled me! Why, this picture I found in the loft, it is a beautiful face, and very well painted. Who did it?"

As he spoke, he turned the picture towards his Father; the old man gave a slight start and said —

"Eh! Oh! I think that was a juvenile effort of mine — I thought it had been destroyed long ago.— What do you want with it? I am sure it is of no use."

"It is extremely well painted, Sir,—for an amateur particularly;—was it from life or fancy?"

"Well, I rather think it was a servant of my mother's, or a country girl, or some one. I used to be fond of sketching in those days. What's the news? I have not read the paper to-day."

"A servant of your mother's?" said Leigh, too much engrossed with the picture to answer his Father's query. "How very odd! I have seen a girl this morning extraordinarily like this."

"You have! Where?" asked his father earnestly.

"At Lady Newbery's — she is a protegée of Miss Everton's." For some reason, for which he could scarcely account himself, he did not say lady's maid.

"Indeed," answered Mr. Leigh? "protegée, — an orphan? What is she? Where does she come from?"

"From some place near the sea where Lady Newbery has been staying. Shall I put this picture back in the lumber room, Sir? It seems a pity to hide it I think."

"Oh yes, put it away by all means; I can't have such rubbish about. I ought to call at Lady Newbery's, Maurice. I have not been since the boy died."

"Yes, Sir!" replied his son abstractedly, and rising from his chair still gazing at the picture, he walked out of the room, and up to his own, and in a large closet he carefully deposited the painting, locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

The next morning he received the following note from Herbert.

"Dear Leigh,—My mother is, as I expected,
" already tired of London (we have been here a
" week to day) and we start therefore for Home-
" wood to-morrow; I have given her fair warn-
" ing however that I cannot live in that place
" without plenty of visitors; to begin with I
" shall expect you 'to pack up your tatters,' and
" come down immediately. No excuses, you like
' the country; I can promise you some shooting
" and lots of beer if you are that way disposed,—

" or painting, poetry and sentiment, if you like
" that better; but come and save from suicide
" or insanity

your friend

HERBERT EVERTON."

" Lady Newbery and her family leave town to-morrow, Sir!" said Leigh, flinging the note across the breakfast table to his Father, " So if you are going to call, it must be to-day. I will go with you, if you like, and answer in person this invitation."

" Very well, certainly. What time?

" Between three and four, Sir, I think."

" I will be ready," and the old man was so, to the moment. When they reached their destination and were admitted by the burly porter, Maurice said he should go at once to his friend's studio. The old man had of course asked for Lady Newbery, and was shown up stairs.

A loud " Come in," told that Herbert was at home and engaged in his favourite occupation. Maurice took advantage of the permission and entered the room, and his eyes at once sought the platform, but there was no model there to-day, and with a half feeling of disappointment he turned them away.

"Well, old fellow, you got my note," was Herbert's first salutation.

"Yes, and I shall be delighted to come."

"That's a good boy — I'm glad to hear it. My poor mother cannot get over the child's death at all, and she says London is so noisy, and she wants to get away somewhere and be quiet, and she likes to have us all with her. I hate the country except just at Christmas, with a house full of people. I never know what to do with myself. I miss this jolly room, too, dreadfully: however I shall get on better when one or two more good fellows come down. Do you like shooting?"

"Very well: I'm not much of a sportsman."

"I'm a wonderful hand at missing the birds, I don't know any one who can do it better," said Herbert, laughing, "but I always go out with a gun, because it's something to do."

"Have you got on better with your portrait since yesterday?" asked Maurice.

"Portrait? Oh! of Mabel, you mean. Yes, rather better, but I don't think it's like her now."

"Where is it?"

"Oh, down there, Leigh, under the Scotch

terrier; is not that a capital little chap?—It belongs to Hamilton of the guards."

"Oh! yes it is like, though! I should know it anywhere."

"Should you? Have you seen the dog then?"

"It is very singular, and the name the same too:" continued Maurice, half aloud, "there is some curious coincidence in this."

"What are you muttering about there, man?" asked Herbert, as he looked round the the easel at his friend. "Oh you've got Mabel's picture, I thought it was the dog's,—so you think it more like do you?"

"Yes, much more. How very odd her name should be Mabel; there is a picture at our house the very image of this, and on the back of it is the name of Mabel: my father says he made the sketch, but forgets who it was; he thinks some servant of my mother's.—Is this Mabel's mother living?"

"I'm sure I don't know, I think not; I only hear her speak of her uncle and father; but really this is becoming interesting and romantic; it will be something to think of and talk of in the country; bring your picture with you, we'll

compare them, and trot out Mabel, and make her tell us her birth, parentage and education."

"It is very odd," said Maurice thoughtfully.

"Is your Governor here?" asked Herbert.

"Yes, he is — a fact I had almost forgotten. I must go up and see after him. Will you come?"

"Yes, I don't mind. The girls are up-stairs, I dare say."

They ascended to the drawing-room, where they found Lady Newbery and the young ladies with Mr. Leigh. They were discussing, with some animation, the propriety of ladies having pet dogs.

"If you could see my little Floss you would make an exception in his favour, Mr. Leigh, I am sure;" said Adelaide, "he is such a darling. Ring the bell, Helen dear, and we will have him up!"

"Ask Mabel to be good enough to bring Floss, Johnson," she said, when the servant answered the summons.

"I can quite understand any one loving a dog;" said Maurice, "they are the most loveable of all animals. One I once had could do all but speak; I am sure he perfectly understood

all I said to him, and would have been delighted to answer me if he could. I would rather have a dog, with the mute eloquence of its honest eyes, for my companion, than many men."

"They are treacherous and uncertain, though, sometimes," said Herbert.

"There are different dispositions in dogs as well as human beings;" answered Maurice, "there is a kind of light clear eye that I distrust in men and animals alike, and I would neither make a pet or a friend of the brute or man that possessed it."

"Oh! here is my pet," said Adelaide springing from her seat as the door opened, and Mabel entered, bearing in her arms a Skye terrier, whose long hair was like silk; its bright black eyes shining out from amongst it like diamonds. "There's an innocent darling," she said, snatching him from Mabel's arms, and holding him up to Mr. Leigh, "he's de best of dood dogs, is'nt he?" she contined, burying the little animal's cold nose in her soft white throat, her long dark curls falling over its back, contrasting well with the dog's white glossy coat. Mr. Leigh made some answer, but not

a very distinct one, and his eyes appeared riveted, not on the dog, but on Mabel. Maurice was the only person in the room, however, who noticed his father's abstraction, and he managed to conceal it, by talking a great deal and very fast about the dog, and then rising suddenly, spoke of some appointment at four o'clock that his father must keep, and so they took their eave.

"Well, Mabel, how goes on the packing?" said Lady Newbery.

"Very well my Lady, thank you," answered Mabel, "it is nearly finished."

"Miss Everton has told you, you are to go with us to-morrow, and not with the servants."

"Yes, my Lady."

"You may take the dog up to my room, Mabel, I am coming up there presently, and when you have done packing you must come and read."

"Thank you, Miss, but I am so much trouble to you."

"Nonsense, child, trouble! — it amuses me very much."

"You are all so good, I shall never be able to thank you;" and poor Mabel's beautiful eyes filled with tears.

"Do not cry then," said Helen smiling kindly, "but run away now and finish your packing. Go, Floss, go, Sir, with Mabel, directly:" said Adelaide, as the dog laid down on the floor and rolled over to be patted, evidently either unlike the dog Maurice had been speaking of, who understood all that had been said to him, or else a very naughty disobedient animal, for he only rolled over and over, and fawned on his mistress and licked her hand, and wagged his tail, and did every thing in short but follow Mabel, till at length Adelaide in despair took him up in her arms and carried him away herself.

At an early hour the next morning the house was deserted by all but the porter and an under-housemaid; the chandeliers were no longer to flirt with the sunbeams, though a stray one might come through the half closed shutters, for they were to be tied up in bags; the few remaining purblind flies would no longer skait upon the mirrors, for they were to be covered with cloth; the moth too would not luxuriate in the curtains, for they were to be beaten from their strongholds in the folds, and the rich damask pinned up in linen, the dust was not to have a chance with the carpets, for they were

to be shaken and rolled up in one corner of the room, the miniature fountains in the conservatory were no longer to play, and in short there was to be a total cessation from business or pleasure in Lady Newbery's town mansion.

The old porter thought he was reading the newspaper, but he only dreamt he was, when a loud ring at the hall-bell disturbed his slumbers. "What does that mean?" he said drowsily, "no one of any consequence at this hour, so he took off his large silver spectacles and rubbed his eyes and his knees before he rose from his chair to answer the noisy summons, and then partially opening one batten of the door he peeped out. On the steps stood an old weather-beaten man dressed in a blue jersey frock and glazed hat, with a red handkerchief tied about his throat; his shoes and stockings covered with dust as though he had come a long journey, strangely unlike the visitors to whom the door was accustomed to be opened. The porter stared at him in wonderment, and then said, "Well, what is it?"

"Be this Lady Newbery's," asked the stranger.

"Why — yes."

"Be her Ladyship's son at home?"

"No they don't any of them 'be' at home."

"Will they be in soon."

"In soon? No, the family is away, out of town, my man. What is it? if you've got a letter I can forward it; where do you come from?"

"Out of town, deary me!"—and the poor old man sighed heavily.

"You seem tired, have you come a long way? Would you like to rest?"

"No thank you.—What be the name of the country-place, and how does us get to it?"

"The name's Homewood, and it's down in Derbyshire, and you goes by the railroad, but what do you want?"

"I want to see the young gentleman."

"Well, I tell you he's out of town, and all parcels and letters and messages are left with me, and I forward them."

"I wants to speak to the young gentleman — never mind — I'll go down in the country — I feels bewildered here."

"Take a seat and rest yourself, old man."

"Noa, noa thank you. I'll go on — Good morrow," and turning slowly away the old man walked down the flight of steps, and the burly

porter resumed his newspaper, and thought no more of the weary stranger who had disturbed him.

A day or two only passed after the family's arrival at Homewood before Maurice Leigh made his appearance, and Herbert who had already felt thoroughly "bored" was delighted to see him. It was glorious weather, fresh breezes morning and evening and a bright glowing sunshine in the day, making it warm enough to sit beneath the trees in the park or under the weeping ash on the lawn, whose graceful branches swept the ground, the thick foliage rendering a seat beneath a perfect seclusion.

"What a paradise you have here, Herbert!" said Leigh as they wandered about the grounds soon after his arrival.

"Yes, it is very pretty, small, but in good taste, is'nt it?"

"In perfect taste, that bit of wild nature in the park is charming."

"Yes, I like that, my father had some idea f grubbing up all that heath, and making it all el, and I don't know what, but the girls and gged so hard to have it left that he con- ed; my father is quite anti-sentiment, — a

sort of practical man, he wishes to turn every thing to account, and I believe would like to plant this lawn with turnips, for he thinks turf and roses a cruel waste of good land; what are you looking at?"

"I see some figures amongst the trees there, are they your sisters? I have not yet made my obeisance to them."

"I dare say it is Adelaide and Mabel. Oh! yes it is,—by the way, did you bring the picture down."

"Yes, I did."

"Let us go and meet them," and they hurried forward. Adelaide first caught sight of them, and throwing the scissors with which she was cutting some flowers into a basket Mabel was carrying, she advanced towards the gentlemen; Leigh spoke to her with all politeness, but in spite of himself his eye wandered to the lovely girl standing at some little distance, who looked a perfect picture with the large wicker basket on her arm filled with Autumn's richest flowers, her own sweet face he thought the fairest flower of all. Mabel had altered much since first Adelaide had called Herbert's attention to her on the

beach; she had then in her clean but coarse clothing formed a pretty object, but now, though still as lovely, her appearance was altered. The rich masses of her dark brown hair were now parted in smooth braids over her forehead, and she wore a small lace cap, which so improves and softens a young and beautiful face. Her dress though only of cotton was well made, and shewed to advantage her excellent figure, and, as she stoodt here with the basket of flowers on her arm, Maurice gazed at her till he forgot the information accorded him by Herbert, that she was only a fisherman's daughter.

"Do not let us disturb your interesting employment, Miss Everton, I shall be delighted to assist you, I am ready armed," and he drew from his pocket a clasp knife.

"Thank you, then you may help me. I want enough for the drawing-rooms and Mamma's boudoir; we like to see the flowers in the rooms as long as we can, — they are almost gone, though, now."

"Yes, but those that are left are quite as beautiful as the summer flowers I think, the colouring is so rich. See here! What a perfect Dahlia! shall I cut that?"

"Oh! yes, if you please, it is a very fine one — here, Mabel, the basket."

Mabel advanced and held the basket for the Dahlia; Maurice threw it in, and as he did so he raised his eyes to her face; something in their glance sent a glow of crimson to her very brow, and she turned quickly away. Maurice, Herbert, and his sister, walked on picking the flowers and gaily talking, and Mabel loitered far behind uttering occasionally a low sigh.

"Oh! Leigh, I wish you would show Adelaide your picture,— the one like Mabel I mean, when you go in."

"Yes," answered Leigh.

"A picture like Mabel!" said Adelaide, "I should like to see that. There's Mamma, and dear good Helen, who has been with her all the morning; I really must go and relieve guard; you will excuse me, Mr. Leigh," and calling to Mabel to take the scissors, she flew off to Lady Newbery and Helen. The former was being wheeled about the garden in an invalid chair, Helen walking by her side, Adelaide joined them, and they proceeded down the shrubbery.

"Shall I ask Mabel about her mother, now, Leigh," said Herbert.

"Eh? Yes if you like."

"Mabel,—Mabel—come here one moment, will you, I want to speak to you before you go in. Have you a mother living?"

"Oh! no sir, my Mother has been dead, many, many years."

"Do you remember her?"

"A little, Sir, very little."

"Humph! Should you know her if you were to see her?"

"Sir!"

"Bless me! I don't mean that—I don't suppose you would now,—I mean, do you remember her face well enough to know a likeness of her if you saw one?"

"No, I scarcely think I should, Sir."

During the whole of this questioning, Leigh had stood with his eyes riveted upon her face, she felt them upon her, and the colour went and came rapidly whilst she answered Herbert.

"Do you know where your mother was born? or where she lived as a girl?"

"My mother and father lived at a place called Hartley Dell in Hertfordshire, Sir, and I think my mother was born there."

"Hartley Dell! then it must be," said Leigh,

"it is very odd, but I think a portrait of your mother has fallen into my possession — you would like to see it would you not?" asked Leigh very kindly. Mabel had answered Herbert with the utmost quietness and unconcern, but a murmured almost inaudible "Yes," was all her answer to Leigh.

"Come then, into the library," said Herbert, "and Mr. Leigh will shew it to you, come Leigh," and the trio proceeded to the house.

That night when the household had retired to rest, one alone remained waking. On the table in his own room Maurice had placed the picture, he had drawn a chair before it and was gazing earnestly at it. What thoughts were busy in his brain, how many airy castles was he building, doomed as they mostly are to destruction. His romantic disposition had now full scope for exercise, it was not a mere painted canvas which he saw, but a living breathing woman, a true simple-hearted loving woman, whose radiant eyes were beaming with tenderness for him, whose small hands he held in both of his, as he opened fresh stores of thought and knowledge to her untutored mind; he could hear the exclamations of wonder, the innocent

artless questions falling from those rich red lips, and then the dream vanished and he was only gazing at a picture.

"This is folly"—he said, rising from his seat, "but she is an intelligent creature, and I could imagine no dearer task than educating this beautiful girl; there is a mind beaming out of her face which would well repay the trouble of cultivating; there was so much thought in her expression as she looked at the picture, it must have been her mother, the likeness is very strong, but Mabel is far the most beautiful: well this is all folly," again he said, "I must try and sleep."—The picture was carefully put away, and the young man was soon sleeping and dreaming of a bright future.

The evenings are growing colder and colder, the winds more rough and wintry, wave after wave comes dashing on the shore, the sky is heavy with lead-coloured clouds and a small fine rain is falling: this weather has continued for some days, and still there seems no chance of its clearing, the sun is setting now, but its light is pale and watery, no rich red glow gives fair promise of a brighter day to morrow, no hope

can be gathered from that sickly gleam of light: the fishermen come to their doors and shading their eyes with their hands, look out upon the sunset, and shaking their heads go back into their homes, saying, "More dirty weather by the look on't."

Hour after hour, unmindful of wind or rain, one figure has been seen pacing the sea-shore with long strides, till it tired even those who watched it. It is an old man, strong and vigorous, and yet he seems bowed by some weight of care, more than by the years which have turned his locks to gray; the daylight fades, the wind grows more tempestuous, the sea comes in more roughly as the tide rises, but still that lone figure walks backwards and forwards on the shore, every now and then wetted by the spray from some white crested wave, yet heeding nothing, seeming to see nothing, still continuing to pace that desolate shore.—At length when night has really set in, he walks to the Rock and climbs the steep steps, and entering the little cottage he closes the door, and the poor neighbours who have watched him can see him no longer; but one to whom night and day are alike, whose eye pierces the

darkness, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, sees and knows the suffering of that worn and anxious spirit, and in His never failing mercy sends him sleep, and for the time — forgetfulness.

Poor Matthew, — since the day John had started to seek his child, he could not rest beneath the roof where they had all once been so happy; he would have no fire, no light, but wandered unceasingly by the sea-shore, only going in at bed-time, taking what little nourishment he wanted upon the beach; still believing Mabel guilty, he was grieved that his old friend should have left him to seek her, and the bright light which had dawned on his heart vanished with Mabel: and the bitter feelings that had been so long nourished there, returned with their old force, for again he saw in the higher classes, the proud and overbearing enemies of the poor, and again he felt his old thirst for vengeance upon those who had so grievously wronged him.

Old John could not write, so there was no hope of hearing from him; but a day or two after he left, a letter came for him, which on opening, Matthew discovered was from Mabel, enclosing some more money. Angrily Matthew dashed

both aside, ejaculating—" No, no, I'll starve first —Then her father has not found her — its all over, we've no child now!" and covering his face with his hands he rocked himself backwards and forwards, in an agony of mind too deep for words.

Could an observer have seen the way in which the two old men passed that night, the contrast would have been a strange one to contemplate. Raby was lying on a small bed in a cottage in Derbyshire, having been found exhausted by fatigue and want of food, by a labourer who bore him kindly to his own home, and with that self-denying Charity so often found amongst the poor, had shared with him his supper, and given him his bed.

Disappointed at his unsuccessful efforts to find his child in London and yet unwilling to give up the search, he had travelled down to Derbyshire and walked many weary miles in the direction of Homewood, till he could proceed no further; but his patience, his hope, had not deserted him; he felt if his strength would only last out, he should reach Homewood and there hear tidings of his child, if not see her: he still believed in her purity

and innocence — he knew that he had instilled into her young mind the principles of right and wrong, had taught her to trust with a firm and unshrinking faith the Giver of all good, to believe in his sure protection, while her best efforts were directed to well doing, and to rely upon His never failing promises; "she knew," he thought, 'that with the temptation there is a way given to escape,' — and she will seek that way I am sure; I do not fear for her, save that she may be working too hard, perhaps she's gone servant to those foin folk, and they're koind and good to her, I dare say; God will bless her and take care of her wherever she be."

Before he slept, he drew from his pocket a Bible, which his new friend perceiving, begged him to read aloud, and with difficulty by the light of a rush candle he read in his weak trembling voice a chapter, whilst the rough labourer sat in silent attention by the bedside, drinking in each word which fell from the old man's lips; then closing the volume, Raby fell asleep, and dreamed he was in the House on the Rock with his child beside him.

The next morning when he strove to rise, poor John found he was unable; a raging thirst

distressed him, and violent pains in his limbs and head, — a faintness seized him on his first attempt to move. "Well," he said to his new friend,— "It's no use, I can't move, I can go no more to seek her, but God will send my child to me, I know He will." In a few moments John spoke no more sensibly, but talked on in a low voice, unceasingly, a string of incoherent sentences. Very much alarmed and distressed, the poor labourer fetched a woman from a neighbouring cottage to stay with John while he ran to the Rector,—doctor, they had none, in that small village—for advice and assistance. The good clergyman came directly, and having prescribed some simple remedy, he asked all particulars concerning him. The man told him all that he knew: "that the invalid had lost his daughter, and fancied she was at Homewood; that he was striving to reach that place, but was too exhausted to get further; a name was written in his Bible which probably was his daughter's,—Mabel Raby."

"A curious story," said Mr. Clifford, "I will go myself to Homewood, and enquire if they know anything of this girl and her father. Poor old man!—over-fatigue has done this;

keep him very quiet, give him the medicine, and I will return here direct from Lord Newbery's; I will ask my wife to send up something for your dinner, and a little arrow-root for the old man:" and giving him some money, Mr. Clifford departed on his kind errand.

There was a small party dining at Homewood, some of those stately, dull, rich, uncomfortable people, who are obliged to be invited by those who have estates in the country. Two slim spare men with large stout wives, and tall fair daughters; a bride and bridegroom, the former a wealthy heiress, the latter with a title in prospective; an M. P., and the guests in the house made up the party. The ladies have left the dining-room early on Lady Newbery's account, for to her dinner is a fatiguing ceremony, and she is glad to lie down on her couch away from the clatter of tongues and fumes of savoury dishes. I believe there are few things men like more than a dinner-party, and women less. The young ladies had drawn on their gloves and prepared for a start, even long before Lady Newbery had moved; and now ensconced amongst the down cushions on the drawing-room sofas, they were discussing music, crochet,

dress and flirtations,—subjects far more to their taste than politics, hunting, and shooting, which had formed the principal topics of conversation at the dinner-table.

In a room far from any at present occupied by the guests, simply and neatly furnished, sat Mabel Raby. The expression of her face implied perplexity; she had writing materials before her and had begun a letter, but she was now pausing as though uncertain how to continue it.

"What shall I do?" she thought, "I ought to leave here, and yet after all their kindness what can I say? I cannot go home to be a burden again to my Father and Uncle. How silly of me ever to have left them at all, what shall I do?" again she said.

A loud ring of the bell at the hall-door startled her from her depth of thought; she rose and drawing aside the blinds, she looked out; the evening was too dark to see anything and with a sigh she said, "well, it is no one for me," and returned to the table, but still she could not help an unusual amount of curiosity as to who so late a visitor could be. She heard a footstep in the gallery and opened her door, but started

suddenly back as she recognised Maurice Leigh. "Don't shut the door, Mabel, I want a light, if you please;" he said, in his own peculiarly tender and respectful voice. Mabel went back and lighted a candle which she brought him. He took it, thanked her, and went away along the gallery to the room he occupied; she listened till his footsteps ceased and he had closed his door, then returned to her writing, when a servant came to tell her that Miss Everton wanted to speak to her directly in her own room; you can imagine perhaps the intelligence Miss Everton had to communicate. Mr. Clifford had driven over to Homewood as soon as he could after seeing the poor old man, and requesting to see Lord Newbery, explained to him his errand. It was of course imparted to Adelaide, and it remained for her to reveal to her protegée the state her Father was in. Poor Mabel!—with many bitter tears she heard these tidings, and then told Adelaide her motive for keeping her Father and Uncle in ignorance of her position.

"My dear Mabel, that was very silly of you, but you did it for the best I am sure, and it is useless to regret it now, your efforts must be

directed to repairing this error of judgment. Mr. Clifford will see you safely to your Father, he has kindly offered to drive you over; stay with him of course, till he is well, and then if you can obtain his consent come back to me." Slipping some money into her hand, Miss Everton wished her kindly good bye, and in a quarter of an hour Mabel seated beside the good Mr. Clifford, was going along at a rapid pace to the village where her poor Father lay.

When Maurice Leigh returned to the drawing-room, Mabel's departure, and in short her history formed the topic of conversation.

"Gone!" he said, "What gone for good."

"I have asked her to return," answered Adelaide, "if her friends will allow her, but that seems a question."

Leigh turned away, and took up a book of prints lying on the table, and spoke but little more all that evening.

It was a long drive to the village where poor John was, and on the way Mr. Clifford took upon him the privilege of his office, and talked seriously to Mabel; he told her what a mistake it was to do wrong that right might come, and how seldom if ever the end was answered.

"You left home without the knowledge, sanction, or advice of your natural protector, of that Father whom by God's command you should honour, and the consequences may be fatal."

"Oh! Sir, don't say so," said the sobbing Mabel, "they are so poor, they stinted themselves for me, it made me wretched, I knew if had asked them, they would not have let me leave, much more to go and live at Lady Newbery's. Uncle has such a hatred against such people, what could I do? and they have been so good to me and to them; twice already Miss Everton has given me money to send them, and I was so happy each time, thinking how they would spend it, and how happy it would make them."

"I know, my good girl," answered Mr. Clifford, "your motives were excellent; but we have one straight road given us to follow, the way is narrow but it leads to happiness,—let no inducement cause you to stray from it, there are broad and tempting paths by which we may walk in apparent safety, but trust them not, hold fast by your duty, and your first is that which you owe to God,—in the faithful performance of that you will violate no other.

Mabel listened to and thanked him for his good counsel, and during the long hours of that night, as she sat by the bedside of her unconscious Father and heard his ravings about her, she felt the full force of all her good friend had told her, and wished again and again she had struggled on in the old way, that she might still have seen her Father well and happy by her side. Towards morning, John ceased talking, and fell into a peaceful slumber, which Mr. Clifford when he came, pronounced as a favourable symptom, and ordered Mabel to keep out of sight, that her presence might not over-excite him on awaking, promising himself, to stay beside him and break the news of her arrival to him. Mabel employed the time, therefore, in writing to her Uncle, telling him of her Father's illness, and that she would return home with him as soon as he could be moved.

After a long sleep John awoke and his first word was "Mabel."

"She is here," said Mr. Clifford gently, "shall I tell her you want her."

"Yes, I want her," said the poor old man, "why doant she come?"

Mr. Clifford called her, and, with a beating heart, Mabel obeyed the summons.

"Ah! dear child, there you be; how long you've been—very long; Uncle was so frightened about 'ee, but I warnt, oh! no, I knew thou wert seafe enough and would come hoame to your poor old father;—what a calm sea, I scarce can hear the weaves — bless you my child, doant stay so long again!" and holding fast by her hand, he fell off to sleep.

Winter has set in with all its rigour earlier than usual, there are hard frosts at night, and cold fogs; the sea is rough and murky, the wind bleak and high, but in the House on the Rock there is a bright fire burning, and its light gleaming through the window is like the light of hope in a desolate heart. Once more the trio are united;—seated on a low stool between the two old men is once again their darling child. John is supported in an arm-chair with pillows, looking weak and ill, but very happy; Matthew is holding one of Mabel's hands, and on his face is an expression of half-shame, half-pleasure.

Mabel is looking very beautiful, but rather

sad; she is telling her Uncle all their adventures; she is dilating with all the warmth of a grateful heart on the kindness she received at Homewood, and it is this which has shamed Matthew, as he recollects all the injustice he had been guilty of.

"And then, Uncle," she continued, "what a friend we found in Mr. Clifford,—he let us want for nothing whilst Father lay ill, and the moment he could be moved, drove us to the station and paid our fare the whole way; everybody has been good to us, — the poor labourer taking Father in at first, and then having us both at his cottage. Oh! who can say there is no goodness in the world? We must never say so, must we, Uncle?— and that sweet Miss Everton, she was so kind, always wanting me to take money to send you; I shall never know how to thank her, nor to shew her my gratitude,— and the pains she took to teach me too — a young lady like that giving up so many amusements, devoting her whole time to me. Oh! they have all been so good."

"Don't talk about it, Mabel, it shames me— it shames me too when I look at her innocent feace, John, and at you, for if I'd been less hard-

judging, Mabel would never have left us loike she did, — I scarce can look at either of you, but you forgive me, old friend, don't you? "

"Yes, yes, Matthew, it was all your love for us, I know that."

"Ah! no one on earth can tell what I felt when I see her come up them steps last night; first the sort of shock to see her so suddenly, then the wish to hold her to my heart,— and then the bitter feeling that she was not worthy, — and I tried to look stern at her, — but she threw her arms round me, and she kissed me loike she used as a baby child, and then, John, I thought I should ha' died of joy,—for I knew she was as good as when she left us, or she would not have done that."

Through the heavy mass of gray clouds that had covered the sky all day, there now broke forth a red light from the setting sun and streamed into the small room, lighting up each pane of glass, tinging the whole heavens with a rich glow of crimson. John turned round, and pointing towards it, said in his low weak voice; —

"At evening time it shall be light—" and then with a bright smile at his child, he kissed

her forehead, and asked her to help him to bed for he was tired.

Yes! the oil in the lamp was failing fast;—never possessing any robust health, the severe exertion and excitement he had undergone had been too much for him, and his strength failed him more each day, yet as he grew weaker he seemed happier; there was a joyous, almost triumphant expression in his face, as of one, who having run a long and wearisome race, felt himself approaching the goal. No one could receive more attention and affectionate solicitude than he did from his daughter and his friend; their whole thoughts were devoted to him; as he was far too weak to get down the cliff, they would help him out to the door during the occasional gleams of sunshine in the day, and supporting him between them, would watch anxiously the effect which the pure beautiful sea breeze might have upon him; but there was no lasting good derived, he was evidently sinking fast, and a fortnight after he had returned home — holding his friend's hand, and with his head on his child's shoulder, he slept the sleep which knows no waking;—no more struggling with poverty, no more looking back upon the

past, or thinking for the future, but the rest,—the eternal peace and rest that his whole life of unexampled faith, had purchased for him.

Matthew's grief was silent, but it was deep and lasting; he drew Mabel from the body, and let her weep upon his shoulder, but he neither spoke nor wept himself.

In the midst of their first sorrow, Mabel received a kind letter from Miss Everton, expressing how much she missed her, and wished her back again, and begging to know if she meant to return. Through her tears she glanced at the lonely man by her side, and instantly resolved that no temptation should take her from him. The money Miss Everton had given her, served to bury her Father; and little as they mixed with their poor neighbours, still a long train of them followed good old John to his last resting place, weeping for sympathy with the beautiful mourner, and offering all in their limited power of assistance and comfort to her and her Uncle.

It was over! — there were only two now beneath the cottage roof, but the spirit of old John appeared not to have deserted it, but still influenced for their good, those whom he

had left behind, — more even than when he lived.

Matthew was far more gentle, kinder than ever to Mabel, striving to amuse her and wean her from her sorrow; — speaking often of Miss Everton and her kindness, leading Mabel to praise her, and tell him of her many acts of consideration and thoughtfulness — listening with pleasure as she spoke — studying daily poor old John's Bible, doubly valuable now in his eyes, and in short striving in every way to follow in the steps of him who had gone "home," as he called it before him; and Mabel, she too strove to follow her Father's bright example of patience and cheerfulness, and recall his many precepts to be her guides through life, valuing them the more because his low trembling voice could no more utter them. Remembering all the sorrow he had borne, and how he had borne it, she tried to bear up against her own trials — trials which none but the searcher of all hearts knew she had to bear. Oh! how needful it is for us to be gentle and patient with each other, for we know not, we cannot know, how one unkind word may add another sorrow to a heart already

too heavy with its burden. We fancy a sharp word hastily spoken cannot be felt, because it is not meant, but it may be the one drop which overflows the cup of sorrow and anxiety.

Mabel had much to struggle against, she had been raised from almost starvation to a position of comfort, nay luxury. Adelaide had with the kindest intention but with great want of judgment, kept Mabel entirely from the servants, and as much with herself as possible, desiring her always to make her room her sitting room; and there in those luxurious chairs, with amusing and instructive books, Mabel passed hours of each day, her most arduous tasks to wash the Skye terrier, sit for Herbert, and dust the books and ornaments in her young lady's room, for it had occurred to Adelaide that she could not have her for a maid, as she did not understand the duties of one, and she had, therefore, only kept her for the amusement of instructing her, and because it was gratifying to have so beautiful a face continually about her. Lady Newbery, too ill to think much about anything, was satisfied to see Adelaide's spirits returning, and stopped not to consider the effect such a life might have upon Mabel. Helen had several times pointed

it out to Adelaide, and begged her to let Mabel be taught hair-dressing and dress-making, and in short the duties of her station, rather than reading and writing, both of which she could do sufficiently well for her position; but Adelaide would not listen to her, and with a perseverance worthy of a more rational scheme, she devoted herself to the instruction of her beautiful protegée. Naturally quick and intelligent, Mabel improved daily, drank in eagerly every fresh information accorded to her, and thus not only became able to read and write well, but imbibed ideas and feelings not at all in accordance with the position in which it seemed her fortune to live.

Bitterly was Mabel suffering for this now; in her poor home, with hardly enough to eat, no companion but an old illiterate man, and no books, how did she sigh for the days which now appeared only as a dream, and besides this, associated with those happy hours was one face, one voice, which haunted her waking or sleeping. Herbert Everton had been kind, very kind, she had seen him much oftener, but she had forgotten all he ever said to her, whilst two sentences spoken by another, were treasured in

her memory, and repeated to herself over and over again.

It was the knowledge of the danger she was falling into, the worse than folly of entertaining such a feeling, which had distressed her on the evening of her unexpected departure from Homewood, and made her think she must leave her kind friends before it was too late.

This secret buried in her heart she had to carry with her for ever, almost afraid to whisper it to herself; a constant struggle with an everlasting, hopeless feeling, hopeless because if her wildest dream could be realized, and He loved her, still it would be a madness, which would never bring happiness—which for his sake she must avoid, must strive against. Oh! yes it was hopeless, utterly hopeless, yet how difficult to forget it in the lone monotony of her present life, and the constant remembrance of those days when she knew him: but she tried to bear up against all this, tried to be happy in her station and to do her duty in it, and that was clearly to work hard, and cheerfully to support her Uncle in his declining days; her struggles were so brave, so unceasing, that they could not fail to be rewarded, at least with partial success;

but often came the Tempter trying to shake her resolution, by shewing her how easily she could return to Homewood and to the happy life she passed there, and see Him again.

Well, a few months went by like this, unmarked by any event, Christmas had turned; the Winter had fortunately not been very severe, and having one less to keep, and receiving aid once or twice from Miss Everton, Mabel and her Uncle had done better than for many winters past. One day having been into the village for some provisions, she was accosted by Mrs. Warren, with the news, that she had let her house, a great wonder at that time of year, and that the people were coming the next day; an old man and his son. Mabel listened to Mrs. Warren's excited statement with but little interest, and quickly returned to her uncle.

It was a bright morning the next day, a stiff breeze blowing, the sea fresh and green, its waves dancing on to the shore, the wind catching the spray and blowing it far inland; there was something so invigorating in the weather, that Mabel's spirits seemed to rise with it, and she went about her accustomed avoca-

tions with far more brightness and activity than usual, and the hours seemed to pass so much faster, that she kept longing to go out for a ramble on the beach; towards the afternoon she did manage to get out, and ran down the steps of the cliff with a degree of buoyancy she had not known for long. She had wandered some distance from home when she heard footsteps behind her, and, she fancied, her name called, she turned round and could scarcely suppress a scream as she recognised Maurice Leigh. He advanced to her as she stood trembling before him, and in those tones so well remembered, said, "Mabel, I am so glad to see you, are you well?" Mabel summoned all her courage to reply calmly, and in cold, respectful accents said, "Quite well thank you, Sir."

"I am come to stay here, Mabel, with my poor father, who has been very ill, and I trust the sea air will do him good."

"I hope it may, Sir," again Mabel coldly answered, and endeavoured to pass on, but he appeared disinclined to let her do so, but asked, "if that picturesque cottage on the Rock was where she lived," told her that he had lately seen Miss Everton who had begged him to en-

quire for her and try and see her, and say that she often thought of her. Poor Mabel! the agitation of seeing him, his touching voice telling her of Miss Everton's kindness, all was too much for her, her eyes filled with tears, she could not answer him, and they both paused, — she moved on, he followed her and walked beside her for some time in silence, but Mabel could not bear this, and suddenly turning, said, "I must go home, Mr. Leigh, my Uncle is expecting me, good afternoon, Sir."

"You are going? well, perhaps I shall see you again, whilst I am here,—often,—Mabel."

"I seldom come into the village," she replied hurriedly, "if I do not see you again, will you tell Miss Everton I am so grateful, I never forget her; I——" she could say no more, but moving her head as if to wish him good bye, went towards home.

All the rest of the day Mabel's spirits again deserted her, and poor Matthew redoubled his efforts to please and amuse her, but it was useless, Mabel could think of nothing but this interview; occasionally a thrill of joy shot through her heart, as she recalled his looks and manner, but it was soon dispelled by the

miserable conviction that it was wrong to indulge in such thoughts; that she must avoid him; — it was her duty; and so she remained in the house for many days, although she could not resist gazing from the window; and each day she saw him, — saw him stroll on the beach, and come and stand under the cliff, and wander about for an hour or two, always in sight of the cottage, but she resolutely kept to her determination, and remained in the house, till at length she was obliged to take home a net she had finished, and with a throbbing heart she descended the steps, — but he was nowhere to be seen, and she proceeded with more courage.

Maurice was not then on the beach, he was detained at home by his father's not being so well. Maurice had been reading aloud to him, and, by a curious coincidence, considering the nature of his thoughts, the story he had been reading turned on a man wedding a girl beneath him in rank; with the greatest eagerness Maurice had read on, anxious to see the termination, and he threw the book down with a gesture of impatience as he found that the story concluded with shewing the misery such a marriage entailed.

"Stupid book, Sir, don't you think?"

"Oh! no, not at all — it is very clever, and an excellent moral, nothing can be so utterly wrong as a marriage of that kind, it is against all principles of right, and though they are few in number, still there are romantic fools in the world, who, caught by a pretty face go and ally themselves to some low born girl, and are as wretched as they deserve to be, afterwards."

Maurice paused for a few moments, and then said, "I do not see the necessity of their being miserable; of course a man does deserve to be miserable who marries only for a pretty face, be she low or high born; but if united to beauty, are goodness and gentleness, surely it is a hard case that birth should preclude her from being taken from a life of toil and privation, to one of comfort and independence, — besides the delight of teaching, enlightening the mind of a young unsophisticated girl, —no town-bred Miss, full of airs and graces, without a thought but for a new bonnet or a fresh conquest — with a false, frivolous, superficial education — were she a Peeress in her own right, I would not" —

Maurice paused suddenly, he had spoken with great excitement, carried away with his subject — the very fact that he saw the justice of his father's remark — knew how unwise unequal marriages were, made him defend them, hoping in the argument to be able to overcome his own as well as his father's scruples. Had he asked himself why he was so anxious on this point, he would scarcely have dared to answer truly.

From the moment he had seen Mabel in Herbert's studio, he had thought, he had dreamt of nothing else: at first it seemed to him that it was only her extraordinary beauty which had so charmed him as an Artist, but that would have passed after the first impression, not have lingered in his memory, till every thing but the contemplation of the picture which resembled her, ceased to amuse or interest him.

Whilst at Homewood he had sought every opportunity to speak with or even look at her, and her gentle modest demeanour, her beauty heightened by better living and better dressing, — the praises of her goodness and intelligence he continually heard from Miss Everton, all served to increase the infatuation which possessed him.

To carry her away to some distant home, where she would be his and his alone, where he could read to her, teach her, love her, and make her love him — see in the depth of her earnest eyes a love for him, the greater because there would be mingled with it an admiration for his superior intellects. He was a man, remember, and in this vision there was this charm to him that he would be reverenced as well as loved,— that she knowing nothing, would wonderingly gaze on him and think him so far superior, some "bright particular star" that had stooped from its sphere to wed her; yes, these were the dreams in which every other contemplation was now merged, and mingled with them was the cold reality which would force him to reflect on the wildness of the scheme, on its difficulties — the greatest of all the meanness of her birth; feeling this a startling objection, still he would not dismiss the bright romantic hopes with which his heart was full, and he was now not sorry that chance had brought forward this conversation with his father.

At his sudden pause, Mr. Leigh looked up, and laughingly said, "Heyday, young man, you're energetic, but you're wrong, Maurice, quite

wrong; married people should be on an equality in every way, to expect happiness, and the misery of inequality in birth is too well known for me to dilate on; you may teach, but you will not make a lady of one not born so, and how would a man of intellect and accustomed to good society, endure being tied for life to a woman who had not an idea in common with him, could neither join with him in conversation, or understand him when he talked to her; and then, even imagining the possibility of making her a decent companion, think for a moment of her relations; unless you can put up with receiving such coarse illiterate guests at your table, you have the alternative of making your wife miserable by taking her from those whom she loves, and who love her, for ever. A cruel thing for both parties, my boy, depend on it;—a brief week or two of a romantic dream of happiness,—from which there would be a bitter awakening for both: I earnestly hope it may never be my lot to be unable to receive with open arms the girl my son may choose for a wife."

"Then I must not go and marry a labourer's daughter, Sir," said Maurice with a poor attempt

at a laugh, "but," he continued more seriously; "I would rather marry her than do worse, as many men have." His father looked up at him suddenly and searchingly, and then asked him if he were not going out, and recommended him to do so. Maurice said, "he was just thinking about it," and walking once or twice up and down the room, he went thoughtfully and silently out.

He strolled up towards the village without any settled purpose, scarcely noting anything which passed, and found himself at length at his old haunt on the beach; it was low water and on the sands a few children were playing; Maurice loved children — loved to watch them at their artless games, and mark the natural grace which their every attitude assumes, making a sketch of that which pleased him most, to carry to his studio, and reproduce in plaster. He stopped now to look at the group before him, on the shingle a fat brown baby was seated, scratching up in its little hands as many stones as such tiny receptacles could hold, and letting them fall again for the pleasure of hearing them clatter on the others; making most innocent attempts at talking all

the time, and sundry crowing self-satisfied noises at its own cleverness.

A boy a year or two older was standing in the wettest part of the sand, digging in his heels so as to force the water into his shoes, an amusement which also appeared to give him considerable satisfaction. Near him was a girl, who having removed her boots and stockings and carefully placed them on a lump of rock, was standing with her naked legs and feet in the small waves which were creeping quietly on to the sand, holding in her hand a little wooden doll, whose feet she was carefully bathing in the water, with all the earnestness and tenderness with which a kind mother would have done the same, for her; at this Maurice drew nearer and spoke to her,—

"Are you very fond of your doll, little girl?"

"Yes," she answered, looking up timidly at him.

"Did you buy it for yourself?"

"No, Mabel Raby gave it to I."

"Indeed! How good of her! Do you know her?"

"Oh! I just do, she come and nurse baby when Mother was ill — there that baby — that's

my sister, and she give Bob and me toys so as we should'nt make a noise.— Oh! don't us just like Mabel,— here she comes," and running out of the water she hastily put on her shoes and stockings. Maurice turned eagerly, and walked quickly towards Mabel; he soon joined her, accompanied her to the steps, and they parted.

On that same night he came down again on the beach, it was cold, and the wind blew high and fresh, but the sky was studded with a multitude of stars; only a few light fleecy clouds flying about. Still possessed with the same wild notions about Mabel, he could not rest far away from where she dwelt; the few hurried words that had passed between them in the morning had awakened in his mind the belief that she loved him, and now he was thinking, "If my manner has induced her to imagine that I love her, I am bound to marry her. What am I, that I should not? Had Everton thought of such a thing it would have been different, — he has sisters too; I, no one who could fancy themselves disgraced by such a marriage. My father would get over it if he saw that it made me happy, and away in some sheltered country nook with her — with my

beautiful Mabel — I should be happy, I am sure I should; it is a strange fate, for it is fate — that I should love this girl. That bright star there I have so often watched as though it were emblematical of my destiny,—now it shall decide," he said with energy, "if that fleecy cloud passes without obscuring it, I will wed Mabel, if not ——" and with an anxiety scarcely credible even to himself, he watched the light cloud scud along passing one star after, another until it neared the one he was watching with such interest, and then growing clearer and clearer, it passed over it like a thin veil, through which the little star gleamed like a diamond.

Maurice drew a long breath; he had been so excited during the few seconds which had elapsed since first this romantic notion struck him, that the heat stood in drops upon his brow, and removing his hat he let the cool breeze play over his head as he said, —

"My mind is made up, to-morrow I will see her and she shall be mine;" he looked up again at the House on the Rock, and saw the light by which he thought she might be plying her weary task, then inwardly saying, "you shall work no more, my poor Mabel, for your

daily bread, no more shall those eyes be strained or those fingers wearied;" he walked slowly home.

The next morning as Mabel was going out, old Matthew said, "he too should take a stroll on the beach." He seldom went out, but it was a bright sunny morning and Mabel encouraged him in his wish: she had not been gone long when Matthew slowly descended the steps to the beach, he had only been there once since his old companion's death, and he felt grave and sad as he walked along the path endeared to him by so many recollections of his excellent friend. The accident to the sailing boat seemed to come strongly back on his recollection, and all the feelings to which it had given rise.

"Well, I am an older, and I hope a wiser man since then;" he thought, "I feel very, very different, and my lesson has been taught me most mercifully, — so little as I deserved mercy too; I that was so hard and unforgiving to others — have had kindness after kindness heaped on me, at least on those I love better than myself: I have no fear to die now, for I can hope to be forgiven as I forgive, none but those who have

felt it can tell what it is to lie down of a night as I have done, and been afraid to pray, because I know'd I was praying for vengeance on myself; but now I can lie down and sleep, sound too, for I do forgive from my very heart every one as ever wronged me in thought, word or deed." His reverie was suddenly disturbed by the sound of footsteps, and looking up he perceived a gentleman about his own age advancing towards him, followed by a servant carrying a camp stool and plaid. "Put the stool down here James, and you can go on, and come for me again in half an hour." The servant did as he was ordered, and went on. Matthew glanced at the stranger for a moment but his attention was diverted by a sail in the offing, and shading his eyes with his hand he stood looking at it.

"What's that, friend?" asked the gentleman.

"I doan't know, Sir, exactly," answered Matthew touching his cap, "but I think it's a Dutch craft by the look on't."

"Are you a fisherman?" again asked the gentleman.

"Noa, Sir, I bean't."

"A sailor?"

"Noa, not exactly that, Sir, I have been to sea though and worked before the mast, worked my passage over to the Bermudas, when I left England in —21, I had been at very different work afore that, but necessity's a hard master, and drives us to a many things we never dreamt of doing." It was not often that Matthew was so garrulous, but he seemed just then to be so inclined and proceeded to speak of his early life. "Yes," he continued, "I little thought I should ever come to live here, when I was wandering with my gun in the woods at Hartley Dell."

"Hartley Dell," said the old gentleman quickly, "is it possible you lived there, and the estate you were on was ——"

"Mr. Leigh's," said Matthew, and as he answered he turned and looked straight at his interrogator. He was pale and trembling as he rose from his seat and approaching Matthew said,—"Your name is Matthew Whiting, and you were my father's gamekeeper,—how and why do we meet now, and here?"

"I doan't know how it is Mr. Leigh, but perhaps, because you may have the chance

afore you die to say you are sorry for the wrong you did one who never injured you."

"I wrong you, what do you mean, is this language to address to me? You forget yourself strangely, — years have not altered you it seems, your insolence I have before had cause to chastise."

"Doan't be hasty now, Mr. Leigh, I have no wish to anger you, but on the other side o' that grave we're both so near, there is no difference of rank and station, — we shall all be judged aloike, and many as have been first here may be last there, you need not be ashamed then to say to me now, poor and humble as I am, that you are sorry for what you did; its many years since, but I don't think you can have forgotten, that because I saved you from the commission of a great crime you got me driven from my situation by a false charge, which would have ruined me, but for a merciful Providence, who, little as I deserved it, helped me through my troubles. I forgive you from my heart, your face tells me you remember it all and that you are sorry; it's hard I suppose for such as you, to say so to one so much beneath you, so I'll be content to believe it, Sir, and

thank Heaven for the chance of telling you how I forgives you."

Mr. Leigh had listened to this speech with mingled feelings of shame and astonishment; his proud spirit revolted at being reproved by such as Matthew, and yet the memory of the cowardly act he had been guilty of had many a time since then haunted him, and a flush of shame mounted to his very forehead. With the rapidity of thought in those few seconds, a hundred different courses of action suggested themselves, and at length he said,—

"I did do you wrong, old man, I was young and foolish then, you provoked me and I was revenged, I knew you and John Raby were rivals, and I told my father that John had in confidence mentioned to me having seen in your possession several articles which were missing, and requested him to discharge you at once, without assigning any reason, that John might not be inculpated. I admit this, and that it was wrong, very wrong, I am willing to make you any reparation in my power, although unhappily I am not so rich as I was; but anything"—and he drew a purse from his pocket. Matthew started and as if choking

down something in his throat, he said in a voice of emotion, but very calmly,—

"I thank you Mr. Leigh, we've said enough, I wish you good morning," and turning away he walked quickly towards the cliff and re-ascended the steps. He needed the softening influence of good John's spirit now, as he flung himself on a chair in the cottage and tried to keep back the bitter thoughts that strove for mastery.

"How would John have borne this," he thought, "it does indeed require the charity which thinketh no evil and is kind,"—but then many a poor man has sold his conscience, how should they know that all are not alike, if they lived amongst us more, they'd learn to judge better betwixt the rogue and the honest man;—he could not tell, may be, that I would rather 'a heard him say 'I'm sorry I wronged you,' and have given me one hearty shake o' the hand, than have had twenty pounds, poor as I am."

Whilst Matthew was thus meditating, where was Mabel? Seated beneath the cliff some little distance from home with Maurice Leigh beside her, her face flushed and excited, his pale and agitated.

"Mabel," he said earnestly, "hear me once more, I tell you if you persist in your determination it will be my ruin. I can think of nothing but you; if I try to read, your face darkens the pages, the profession I so loved is now distasteful to me, and without you I feel I shall never resume it: we are not the arbiters of our own fate, and there appears a strange power urging me on to love, to wed you: I have tried to resist it, Mabel; thought over all the arguments you so coldly urge," he continued with some bitterness, "but it is useless, and again I repeat, without you I am a lost man."—He paused, and looked with searching anxiety in her face, at length she sobbed forth;

"I am but a simple ignorant girl, and cannot explain all I mean, but I know, I feel it would be wrong and that I ought not for your sake, indeed for your sake—you, your father—oh! do not, it is so cruel," and clasping her hands over her face she wept as though her heart were breaking.

"Mabel, Mabel, don't sob so it kills me, I would not force your inclination, but I know, I feel you love me, and why should we both be wretched. It would be a noble self-sacrifice

on your part if you alone suffered, but I too Mabel, I should never be happy again," and with gentle force he removed her hands from her face, — she raised her head and looked at him, a look full of tenderness, love and reproach, and then murmured.

" My Uncle, I cannot leave him and you— oh! it is impossible."

Maurice started, and said hurriedly, " He shall never want for anything, but we must live alone, dearest, I could not—"

She started from her seat. " Enough, enough," she said, " now I am resolved, — Heaven bless you and help me."

The utter despair with which these words were spoken went to Maurice's heart, and haunted him long, long after; he made a hurried movement forward to prevent her leaving him, when another person stood beside him, — his father.

He looked first at Maurice, then at Mabel's retreating figure as she flew along the beach, trying as it were to escape from herself, and then said.

" What is the meaning of all this ?"

Maurice, too much excited to think whether

it were prudent, told his father all the circumstances. Mr. Leigh listened silently, and then demanded with something approaching a sneer:

"And this fair heroine is—

"Mabel Raby, the protegée of Miss Everton."

"Mabel Raby! and the Uncle to whom she is so devoted—what is his name?"

"I don't know, but she lives with him in that cottage on the cliff."

"I thought as much," answered Mr. Leigh, "come home with me now, and say no more on this subject until I renew it. My life has been an eventful one, and this concluding passage of it stranger than all."

Side by side the Father and Son walked to their lodgings, both absorbed in their own reflections, whilst Mabel hurried on in the opposite direction, and found her Uncle seated as we have described him in deep thought. She flew to him, and kneeling down by his side, said

"Uncle, dear Uncle, you must come away from here, we must both come away and Mabel, your own little Mabel will stay with you always — for ever — don't ask me anything

but take me away. — Oh! take me away, or I shall die, Uncle, here, indeed I shall."

Matthew raised her from the ground where she was now sobbing so bitterly with her head on his knees, and tried to draw something like reason from her, and some account of her sorrow, but it appeared hopeless; she only continued to implore to be taken away, and at length having induced her to lie down, he sat by her side holding her hand till she sobbed herself to sleep, wondering what could have caused such painful agitation to his darling child.

In the evening, Mr. Leigh, who had remained in his own room since the morning, sent for Maurice, saying he wished to speak to him.

"Maurice," he said, "I have thought over our conversation this morning with great earnestness, and after I have had a little talk with you, I am going to make a proposal to you.

First of all, I must tell you, that before I was your age, I wronged most severely Mabel Raby's father and mother, and the man she calls Uncle. You will spare me the necessity of repeating the circumstance, suffice it, it

is a sin which I have never forgotten, and I should be glad before I die to make reparation for it. My youth, was in short, one long scene of wrong-doing, it is just that I should pay dearly for it. I can imagine nothing happening to me which I should regret so bitterly as your marrying beneath you, but the singularity of this circumstance, the fact of your loving one whose parents I so wronged, seems to me as though Providence saw fit I should thus be punished;—it is a very heavy punishment, Maurice, but I feel it should,—it must be so. Now this is my proposal, that you marry this girl, and to overcome her scruples, offer to the old man a home for life beneath my roof; but Maurice you must take her away, away far from me, I implore you. I shall not trouble you long, my health and strength fail me more and more each day, and when you go, you must bid me farewell for ever. I cannot receive this girl as my daughter."

Maurice listened to this proud concession, with mingled emotions, but his mad passion for Mabel overcame every other, and he eagerly accepted his father's offer, and hurried off at once to the House on the Rock. His father's

feelings whilst he was gone, can only be imagined by those whose pride was overbearing as his. He had formed great schemes for his son, dreamed of some alliance which should retrieve their shattered fortunes; and to be thus disappointed, through a descendant too of those people he had injured,— his bitterest enemy could have wished him no heavier punishment.

During that hour of his son's absence, he suffered mentally more than in the whole course of his long ill-disciplined life; the sins he had committed came before him with painful distinctness, as he lay back in his chair with closed eyes,— a procession seemed to pass before him of wasted hours, opportunities of good neglected, money spent for bad purposes, acts of injustice, selfishness and heartlessness,— and he would have given all the wealth he had so wasted, and much of the time, to have now with failing health and strength, the easy conscience which would have made him look back on the past with pleasure, and on the eternal future, without dismay. He tried now to console himself with thinking, that the concession he had just made, would make reparation for that one sin of which he had been guilty, and

to look with less horror on it, on that account, and longed with impatience for his son's return to learn the success of his mission,—he dared not indulge the hope of its failure, for he felt sure they would too readily seize on so bright a change of fortune.

He started from his chair as the handle of the door turned, and Maurice came in; but there was no joy in his face, nor glance which spoke the accepted lover.

"Well," said Mr. Leigh eagerly,—Maurice threw himself on the sofa and made no answer. "Of course she is only too delighted," repeated his father, scornfully.

"I have not seen her," answered Maurice, slowly and distinctly, "she is not well, I have had a long conversation with Matthew Whiting, and I and Mabel Raby, meet no more."

"What," exclaimed his father, "has he dared to refuse his niece to my son!"

"Spare me further questioning, Father, I implore you, — there is no need for this subject to be renewed between us."

"There would not, certainly, if you in your mad folly had not stooped to love this girl, and place yourself in a position to be insulted by her beggarly relations. You look now pale and

jaded, as though years had passed over your head, and it is my business to enquire on what grounds, the honour you would have conferred on this young woman, has been insolently rejected. Doubtless this heroine has been disappointed in her expectations, and you have not wealth enough to purchase such beauty as hers."

With a gesture, as though he strove to keep back too hasty an expression, Maurice said, in a voice of evidently forced calmness, "I have not been insulted, Sir. Mabel Raby is an angel a Duke might be proud to make his own, and Matthew Whiting, an honest hearted man, who would shame with his high principles, some, who possessed of many more advantages, have acted with less honour. Once more I beseech you spare me on this topic." And to avoid the possibility of a continuance of it then, Maurice walked out of the room.

The next day a horse and cart stood at the foot of the steps which led to Mabel's dwelling, a boy and a man were with some difficulty carrying down the steep descent, different articles of furniture; it occupied some time, but at length the cart was filled, the door of the cottage opened again, and arm-in-arm Matthew

and Mabel came forth and descended the steps; having reached the bottom they turned round and gave one long look at the little dwelling, and then making a sign for the cart to proceed, they followed it slowly. At some distance unperceived by them, their proceedings had been watched by a tall figure, who with great earnestness had noted every movement, and stood gazing until the last trace of them had disappeared, and then with a slow and heavy step walked away to the village.

Yes, they were gone — gone for ever — from the home which circumstances had rendered so painful to them. Mabel's alarming agitation and earnest entreaties had attained their object. Matthew could refuse his darling nothing, and before Maurice's visit he had spoken to a fisherman whom he knew wanted the cottage, and at once without hesitation agreed to part with it; the arrangements were but just concluded and Matthew returned, when poor Mabel, from the window caught sight of Maurice ascending the steps, with a cry, she seized her uncle's arm and besought him not to let her be seen, to say she was ill, and hurrying into the next room she locked the door just as Matthew in answer to

Maurice's knock admitted him. Their conversation was long and serious, Matthew listened patiently to Maurice's proposal, and then said, —

"Young man, I honour and respect you for your honest love for this poor girl, she has no father, no protector on earth but me,— I have no real power over her, but if I had, I'd prevent her marrying you, I tell you candidly. I'll go and tell her what you say, but I can't live under your father's roof."

"Tell me," said Maurice eagerly, "what was the wrong my Father did to you and yours, and let me, Oh! let me repair it by a life-long devotion to Mabel."

Affected by the earnestness of Maurice's manner, and touched by his love for his darling Mabel, old Matthew extended his rough hand to him as he said,

"Noa! noa! From my lips you shall hear nothing of your Father you didn't ought to hear, — you are a noble young man and I wish from my heart you were one of us, and I'd be proud and happy to trust my Mabel to you, — but not as you are, not as you are."

A low trembling voice called "Uncle," Mau-

rice started forward, but Matthew stood before him and received through the half opened door, a slip of paper from Mabel's hand.

"Give it to him," she said, and again closed the door. Eagerly Maurice seized it as Matthew held it out to him, and when he had read it, he folded it carefully and placed it in his bosom, and then turning to Matthew he said in a voice of deep melancholy.

"It is useless to say more. Whiting, tell her I shall never cease to love her, and that I pray she may be happy."

Before Matthew could answer him, he was gone. Pity and feel for him, ye who have awaked from a bright dream of joy and happiness to a cold and blank reality. No matter how wild the dream, it does not make the suffering less to be calmly told it was wild and foolish; if you have indulged in it, if you have felt it would make you happy beyond all earthly things, have believed it could be realized, the agony with which you learn its utter hopelessness is hard to bear indeed.

Twice before he reached home, he paused to read again the note,—the lines were few but they were blotted with tears. "If you love me you will

leave this house and never try to see me again — I cannot alter my determination." He wou'd not against her will, seek her, but he could not deny himself the melancholy gratification of wandering near her dwelling, and with the deepest sorrow, he saw her and Matthew on the following morning leave their home evidently for ever. He tried to learn in the village where hey had gone but no one knew, though all spoke of their regret at losing the beautiful girl they had loved for so many years, and who was endeared to them by so many acts of kindness and consideration to them and their children.

When he reached home his father threw across to him a letter. It was from Matthew, thanking Mr. Leigh for his offer, and telling him that the best proof he could give of his gratitude, and also of his hearty forgiveness of the past, was by doing all in his power to prevent his son from an act, which would have made both him and his Father wretched for life, it concluded with expressing, in its simple and untutored language, the admiration he felt for Maurice's noble conduct, and hoping that he would in time be happily united to one in his

own rank of life. It was very touching his allusion to his "poor child," as he called Mabel, and the earnestness with which he conjured Mr. Leigh to aid him in his efforts to prevent his son meeting Mabel again. Maurice made no comment, but he saw that the effect on his Father had been good, he evidently could not help feeling the generosity of this conduct as contrasted with his own, and softer and better thoughts seemed in his heart. They did not after this remain much longer in the village, Mr. Leigh's health made no visible improvement, and he fancied that his son's depressed state would be revived by change of scene, they, therefore, removed to a little inland village, where Mr. Leigh quite expected a few weeks would restore Maurice's spirits, and bring utter forgetfulness of the past.

Are there not moments in your lives when you wish you could peep into futurity, and see how much of joy and sorrow it has in store for you, but One in infinite love and wisdom has seen fit, to spare you a knowledge which would oftentimes bring with it a weight of anxiety too much to be borne, — but though you cannot attain this knowledge for yourselves, you may

possibly like to know the future of her whose fortunes you have followed, I trust with some degree of interest.

Imagine then that a train of years have passed away, and that you are visiting a country village; there is plenty to see there to while away an hour pleasantly.—An old Church full of monuments and brasses, and an old curious font;—then there is a well, which the country-folks have invested with some magic power, worth seeing, because it is so beautifully situated, and the village girls, bringing pitchers and pails to fill, form pretty groups about it. You must visit too an old building altered into Almshouses now, said once to have belonged to some noble family, about which they tell an awful legend accounting for its abandonment; the walls and ceilings are carved oak, and there are quaint handles to the doors, and strange fastenings to the windows, and names cut in the small diamond panes; and when you have seen all this, you must go to the schools built by the lady of the "Great House," and see if through the veil of years you can recognise in the Schoolmistress, an old acquaintance.

Seated in an arm-chair at the open window,

into which clusters of roses are peeping, is a fair woman, still fair and lovely, though many years have passed, whom you must recognise. Three or four tiny children are standing before her, their hands behind their backs, saying their lessons; she listens with a patient smile to the little voices, and with a kind nod of approval sends them back to their places, as she rises to receive a new comer in her pretty and orderly school-room. Another old acquaintance, Helen Everton, — now Helen Stanley, a wife and mother, is standing beneath the roof she herself has raised for the education of the village children, talking to Mabel Raby, — still Mabel Raby, who is turning thus to the best account, the instruction which had been so generously accorded to herself; for though Adelaide, now the wife of a Peer's younger son, had in the whirl of fashionable life, forgotten the pretty toy which had once given her so much pleasure, yet Mabel did not forget all she owed her, for by her former kindness, she was enabled thus to accept the thoughtful offer to be the mistress of the schools, which the good and gentle Helen had made her.

A simple cross in the Churchyard, and with

his name engraved on it, marks the resting-place of Matthew Whiting, he had gone "home" to his friend, dying a calm and happy death, at peace with the world, leaving his darling Mabel provided for by the fortunate chance of Helen Everton's lot, having been cast in the very village, where she had taken up her abode.

Maurice Leigh, Mabel never named, until a short time before her Uncle's death, a newspaper paragraph paled her cheek and filled her eyes with tears; but she soon recovered herself, and handing the paper to her Uncle, said, "I am so glad, how good God is to me,—I have so longed to know he was well and happy," read that. It announced the marriage of Mr. Leigh, the eminent sculptor, to an heiress of great expectation. Matthew made no answer, only kissed Mabel very fondly, but, a few moments after, said, "he wished, she had married Farmer Maitland's son."

"Dear Uncle, don't say so,—I am happier much happier as I am. Every day I live, I feel I did right, and knowing I am provided for life, through Mrs. Stanley's extreme kindness, I have nothing left to wish for or desire but to live here,—so that hereafter I may join

my dear Father, where there is neither sadness nor sorrow; nothing can suit me better than the life I lead,— I love the children and they love me, — I have made many friends here, every body is kind to me — and indeed my dear, dear Uncle, I would not change my position, no, not to be — "

And Mabel meant what she said, for though there were moments when the wild excitement of the romantic love of days gone by, would come back to her forcibly, still in the years that had passed since then, she had been convinced by experience, how wisely, how mercifully all had been ordained, and the reward for the struggle she had so nobly made, was the now calm and peaceful tenour of her life.

When she first came, she had excited both admiration and curiosity, all spoke of her great beauty and wondered that she remained unmarried; there was scarcely a young man in the village who did not make serious advances to the beautiful mistress of the school, but a cold discouraging smile was all they could obtain; one more dauntless than the rest actually ventured a proposal, but the firm and decided rejection he received was a warning to others,

and Mabel remained for the future unmolested.

She could not love again, she would not marry, so you find her still Mabel Raby, loved and respected by all who know her, carrying always with her a priceless jewel, a calm contented spirit. Yes, though no longer in that dwelling where her early years were passed, Mabel's true, pure religion, that religion which visits the widows and fatherless in their affliction, and keeps itself unspotted from the world, proved that she had built and dwelt in that House, over which the storms of life had passed without shaking it, for it was founded on a Rock.

FINIS.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. NICOL, 60, PALL-MALL.

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